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# Epochs of Church History

EDITED BY THE

REV. MANDELL CREIGHTON, M.A.

THE CHURCH AND THE PURITANS

# EPOCHS OF CHURCH HISTORY.

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# THE CHURCH AND THE PURITANS

1570—1660

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE history of the Reformed Church of England between the years 1570 and 1660 is too often treated as if it were but the history of a Government department of education and morals. The close connexion which undoubtedly existed between Church and State under the Tudors and the Stuarts has tended to obscure the fact, that during those years within the bosom of the Church itself was being worked out, independently of the Government, a problem which was essentially religious in its nature, and which only affected politics when men felt bound to put their principles into practice and try to enforce them upon others. That problem was no less than whether England as a nation should or should not cut itself off from historical Christianity, from the principles of Christianity as they had been understood for sixteen centuries; or, in other words, whether Puritanism should or should not succeed in establishing itself as legitimately within the pale of the English Church. That question was decided once for all in the negative by the Laudian movement, but



by that movement not in its political, but in its religious development, by Hooker and Andrewes and the opponent of Fisher, not by Charles I. and the President of the High Commission Court. Like all great questions, it was solved by the action of the human mind much more than by courts or governments. For this reason, therefore, I have tried to make this question the central one of those with which this volume has to deal, and have devoted more space to the consideration of the origin and intellectual basis of the Laudian movement than might at first sight seem justifiable.

Among the original authorities upon whom I have mainly relied may be mentioned, besides the State Papers, Cardwell, Strype, the Zurich Letters, Laud's Diary, Hooker, Heylin, Prynne, May, Clarendon, Baillie, Rushworth, and Cromwell; while among recent historians I should like to express my great indebtedness to Dr. Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, Mr. Perry's *History of the Church of England*, Dr. Stoughton's *History of Religion in England*, Mr. Simpson's *Life of Campion*, and Mr. Barclay's interesting sketch of the *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*. For the reigns of James I. and Charles I. the assistance of Mr. Gardiner's *History of England from the Accession of James I.* has been simply invaluable.

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# THE CHURCH AND THE PURITANS.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE STATE OF RELIGION AT THE BEGINNING OF ELIZABETH'S REIGN.

THE changes in the Church of England begun at the Reformation were not completed until the Restoration, when Church and State agreed to accept the Prayer Book in its revised form, and to enforce conformity to it by law; but the direction which the movement was eventually to take was settled in the reign of Elizabeth. It was under her that the system of the Church became fixed after the struggles of the sixteenth century. It was her guiding hand that marked out the middle course between the Catholicism and the Protestantism of the day, which it has been the special boast of the Church of England ever since to have attempted to keep.

Henry VIII. contented himself with asserting, in ecclesiastical affairs, the same principles which in civil affairs had already proved to be the chief supports of his throne, and to a great extent the cause of his

popularity, *i.e.* the independence of the nation and the supremacy of the Crown. He did not hesitate to apply these principles to his own advantage, with no greater regard to right and justice than he displayed in his dealings with the constitution. Still, in spite of much tyranny to individuals, of much rapacity, of much open violation of pledges solemnly given, Henry succeeded with singular dexterity in making the nation realise that the ecclesiastical change through which it was passing, was in its main essence a return to, and not a subversion of, the old principles of the ecclesiastical organisation; a re-assertion of buried but not forgotten precedent, in part a revival, in part a development, but in no sense a revolution.

Edward VI. and Mary went much further. By their rival attempts to alter the character of the Church as it had been left by Henry—the one to make it Protestant, the other to make it Papal—they plunged England into the storm of continental controversy and continental politics, which it had been one of the great objects of Henry to avoid. Men were obliged to range themselves on one side or the other under the banners of the great leaders of the continental struggle. To be opposed to the Pope was to be a Protestant in the sense of Luther or Calvin. Not to be a Protestant was to be a Papalist in the sense of Ignatius Loyola or Philip II. It is significant that Reginald Pole, who in 1541 was the leader of the party of conciliation between the Catholics and the Lutherans at the diet of Ratisbon, was in 1555 the abettor, if not the leader, of the Marian persecutions. Men were opposed to each other, not, as in Henry's reign, because they looked upon themselves

as belonging to different parties of the same religious body, but as belonging to different religious bodies. When Swiss Protestant theologians were placed in the teaching chairs of the Universities, when persons who had never received Episcopal Ordination were put into English benefices, or when English bishops were proceeded against for heresy because they had rebelled against the Pope, it was evident that principles were working among the leaders on both sides far removed from the doctrinal orthodoxy and national independence of Henry VIII.

It was the great aim of Elizabeth to take up and pursue the policy of her father. To this she adhered consistently throughout her reign. In all her dealings with the difficulties which surrounded her, whether abroad or at home, she never forgot that she was the daughter of Henry VIII. She tried as far as she could to act as she believed he would have acted. In the affairs of the Church this tendency was more marked than in her domestic or foreign policy, for she was more free to follow her own inclinations. In the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, passed soon after her accession to the throne, she re-asserted, almost in the language originally used by Henry VIII., the supremacy of the Crown and the independence of the Church. She was careful to declare in the very title of the Act of Supremacy that she was but restoring to the Crown an '*ancient jurisdiction*,' and not investing it with fresh powers. By her Royal Injunctions issued in 1559 she explained the true scope of the Royal Supremacy to extend only to 'that authority used by the noble kings of famous memory,

The aims of  
Elizabeth



Henry VIII. and Edward VI., which is and was of ancient time due to the imperial Crown of this realm; that is, under God, to have the sovereignty and rule over all manner of persons born within these her realms, dominions and countries, of what state, either ecclesiastical or temporal, soever they be, so as no other foreign power shall or ought to have any superiority over them.' By her repudiation of the title of Supreme Head, she was careful to dissociate herself from the evil traditions of the dictatorships of Cromwell and of Northumberland. By the pains she took that Archbishop Parker should be canonically consecrated; by her sanction of the re-introduction into the Prayer Book of 1559 of the rubric which enjoined the use of the eucharistic vestments; by her introduction into the twentieth Article of 1571 (probably with her own hand) of the acknowledgment of the authority of the Church in controversies of faith; by her dislike of clerical marriage, and by her retention of much of the old ceremonial in the services of her private chapel, she showed how anxious she was to insist upon the continuity of the life of the Church as an obvious historical fact as well as a useful controversial argument.

Elizabeth was thus prepared not merely to admit, but to insist upon, the independent character of the organisation, and the reality of the uninterrupted life, of the Church. She was careful to make it clear that, from her point of view, the schism, if there was schism, was the act of Rome, and not of England. Yet to her, as to her father, the maintenance of her crown and the strength of her government were ever the first considerations. All else

Prerogative  
government  
in Church  
and State

must be sacrificed. No possible rival could be permitted within the sphere of her own influence. Scotland was too near for a rival queen to be allowed freedom of action. The first mutterings of the awakening spirit of Parliamentary liberty were jealously watched and suppressed. Above all, religion, the strongest of the powers which swayed men and nations in the sixteenth century, was to be tied to the chariot wheels of royalty. No religion but that of the Queen was to be allowed to exist in her dominions. The Church herself—free though she was proclaimed to be in her jurisdiction by her Articles; independent of all worldly power in her origin and organisation though she was acknowledged to be in her Prayer Book, now a statute of the realm; strong though she was in the traditions of ten centuries of vigorous life—was to be the humble handmaid of monarchy. Her freedom, like that of the State, was a freedom after the Tudor pattern—a child too carefully cherished by its mother ever to dare to lift up its hand against her, too fondly embraced ever to be permitted to grow.

Just as in her civil government Elizabeth habitually exercised an amount of personal authority which Parliament, as it grew in political capacity, was soon to find incompatible with the constitutional liberties of the nation; so in her ecclesiastical government she was permitted a license of prerogative which was soon found incompatible with the constitutional liberties of the Church. By the 17th clause of the Act of Supremacy<sup>1</sup> the Crown was stated to be invested with power 'to visit, reform, redress, order, correct and amend all such

<sup>1</sup> 1 Eliz. c. 1.

errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, offences, contempts and enormities which by any manner, spiritual or ecclesiastical power, authority, or jurisdiction, can or may lawfully be reformed, ordered, redressed, corrected, or amended;’ and by the following clause it was empowered to appoint commissioners to give effect to this jurisdiction. Such was the origin of the Court of High Commission, which was a powerful engine of ecclesiastical government in the hands of Elizabeth and the earlier Stuarts, but was declared to be unconstitutional by the Long Parliament of 1641 and the Restoration Parliament of 1661. The right of legislation over the Church by virtue of the Royal Supremacy, without the consent of either Convocation or Parliament, was frequently exercised by Elizabeth by the issue of injunctions and declarations; but after her time this questionable practice gradually gave way to a more orderly and constitutional procedure, much as the analogous right of legislating in civil matters by proclamation fell into gradual disuse. After the Restoration the most noted exercise of it was the admittedly unconstitutional Declaration of Indulgence of James II. in 1687. In her treatment of Church property too she showed herself an apt pupil of her father, and even challenged comparison with some of the worst sovereigns that ever disgraced the English throne. Like William Rufus, she kept sees vacant, and appropriated the revenues during the vacancy. Like Henry VIII., she re-annexed to the Crown the first fruits of benefices which since the thirteenth century had been paid to the Pope, and were not restored to the Church to whom they rightfully belonged till the reign of Anne. She even obtained an Act of

Parliament in 1559 to authorise her to exchange manors belonging to Bishoprics for tithes which Henry VIII. had taken from the monasteries; and as in such exchanges the value of what was given was always much less than the value of what was taken by the Crown, the Queen rendered herself liable to the accusation of using the proceeds of one robbery as an instrument whereby to effect another.

Such was the character of the settlement of religion effected by Elizabeth. It bears on every part of it the marks of the practical wisdom and the disregard of principle, characteristic of the Tudor race. Like the Elizabethan sovereignty, it seemed that it could never escape from the dangers which surrounded it in its cradle, yet before the death of the Queen it had won for itself respect abroad and pre-eminence at home. It was a compromise, and, like all religious compromises, it won the politicians and the indifferent, it lost the earnest, and it pleased nobody; yet before fifty years had passed it had given birth to a school of religious philosophy which has earned a permanent place in the history of religious thought. It was essentially the work of a statesman, it was carried out in the interests of government far more than in the interests of truth; yet in less than a century it had shown itself capable of inspiring enthusiastic love, and had weathered the storms of persecution. The secret of the strength of the Church of England since the Reformation lay, not where Cranmer sought for it, in the power of the Church to influence and moderate the Protestantism of the Continent, with which it was politically allied; not where Elizabeth and James I. tried to place it, in the

The Elizabethan settlement

support that the Church gave to and derived from the power of the Crown ; but where Hooker, and Laud, and George Herbert found it. It lay in the right of the Church to the prestige and the traditions of the Church of the Apostles and of the Middle Ages, in her fearless appeal to history, in the fact that, however great might be for the time her helplessness in the hands of the Crown, however severe the buffetings of discordant opinion she had to endure, though she might change her mode of worship, and in part remodel her constitution, nevertheless she preserved unimpaired the faith and the discipline of the Catholic Church.

A crisis so acute as the Reformation could not fail to bring in its train results of its own quite different from any which had been experienced by the English ecclesiastical parties Churchmen of the Middle Ages. New problems, difficult enough to tax all the statesmanship of the leaders of Church and State, presented themselves for solution ; and first among these problems came the existence of religious division.

The policy of Edward VI. and of Mary had left three religious parties distinctly defined in England. (1) The Roman Catholics, who, attached to the old forms of worship, had preserved a hearty loyalty to the Pope as the vicar of Christ, and had seen with misgiving the relations between Rome and England impaired in the reign of Henry VIII. They had been unable to follow Somerset and Northumberland in their Protestant policy in the years 1552 and 1553. Startled at the threatening declension of England into heresy, they threw themselves into the arms of the Pope, welcomed the reconciliation of Mary with Rome, acquiesced in

the persecution which followed, and learned to look upon Philip II. as the leader and champion of orthodoxy.

The accession of Elizabeth put them into a considerable difficulty. They were anxious to be loyal to her government. Most of them saw but little objection to the Prayer Book or the services of the Church. It was rumoured that the Pope himself was willing to give his sanction to the Prayer Book, if only his Supremacy was recognised. On the other hand, after having been the dominant party in the reign of Mary, after having identified themselves with the Papal claim of Supremacy, they could not in honour draw back from demands which the Pope might make upon them. They accordingly consulted their own convenience, and perhaps their inclinations, in conforming outwardly to the Government by attendance at Church, while Mass was said privately in their own houses.

(2) The Protestants were for the most part followers of Zwingli and Calvin. In thorough sympathy with the Reformation in Switzerland and Scotland, they professed doctrines wholly incompatible with historical Christianity. To them the Church of the Fathers was as corrupt as the Church of Mary and of Pole. The Pope was undoubtedly Antichrist. Pure Christianity had been unknown from the times of the Apostles to those of Luther. Such men looked upon the Reformation in England as a movement which was merely in its infancy. In the reign of Edward VI. a good beginning had been made, but much still remained to be done. The Marian persecution, and the exile which resulted from it, whetted the zeal of the reformers, and made them the more determined to destroy from out of

the Church of England, whatever might be left which savoured of the old superstition. It required the earnest expostulations of their leading theologians to induce men like these to acquiesce in the Elizabethan settlement. As it was, they merely acquiesced in it, they never accepted it.<sup>1</sup> They looked upon it as an instalment, and eagerly watched for an opportunity of carrying it further. They conformed to the Church, not like the Roman Catholics, because they did not wish to quarrel with the Government, but because they hoped in a few years to make the Church different from what it was.

(3) The most powerful, perhaps the most numerous of these parties were the Anglicans, the source of whose strength lay in the inertness of the mass of mankind. They included in their ranks all who were neither adherents of the Pope nor followers of Calvin. In that motley assembly were many who were careless about scientific precision in matters of religion, and valued the worldly wisdom of the *via media* of Henry and Elizabeth. There were others who were deeply attached to the principles of historical Christianity, and were ready to accept the Elizabethan settlement as an expression of them adequate, if not wholly satisfactory. There were some who were pledged to the Reformation by the spoils with which it had endowed them; and many more who, indifferent in their faith and immoral in their lives, were willing to surrender their consciences to the keeping of the Government, provided the terms of conformity were not too severe.

To combine these parties by a common obedience to

<sup>1</sup> Zurich Letters, i., Lett. III., app.

an uniform worship was the problem which Elizabeth and Cecil had to solve, and it was a problem which was in its very nature insoluble. It was hopeless to expect to include for long in the same religious fold the Marian convert and the Calvinistic enthusiast. It was clear that by losing both the Church of England would lose much of the religious zeal of the country, and be in danger of degenerating into mere official respectability. It was possible that if that zeal were arrayed against her the stability of the Government itself might be seriously endangered.

But, besides this, Elizabeth had a special difficulty to contend with. In other countries the difficulties brought about by religious division were to some extent mitigated by the support and sympathy, which the different Governments or religious bodies, as the case might be, received from each other. The obligations of religion and the dangers to the authority of the Government from the dissidents were the same, whether the actual seat of the conflict was in France or in Germany or in the Low Countries. Wherever a difficulty arose between the religions, the whole Catholic world and the whole Protestant world felt themselves interested. Whenever a Government was threatened by an opposition which sheltered itself under the garb of religion, all Governments felt themselves equally attacked, and were ready to come to the assistance of what was felt to be a common cause. The peculiar course which the Reformation had taken in England deprived Elizabeth of this advantage. England had become isolated from the rest of Christendom, and cut off from the flow of its religious thought. She was



not Catholic, as countries which accepted the decrees of the Council of Trent understood Catholicism; still less was she Protestant, as Calvin or William the Silent understood Protestantism. Politically, she was almost from the first allied with the Protestants, on account of her opposition to Spain; but, with the exception of the unlucky commission sent by James I. to the Synod of Dort in 1619, there is no trace of any attempt on the part of England to influence religious feeling on the Continent.

This isolation was the direct result of the Reformation. It helped to strengthen the insularity of the English character. It helped to weaken the influence of England in the world. It helped to narrow an Englishman's conceptions of religion and hinder the progress of a spirit of toleration. Nevertheless, it enabled England to settle her own religious differences for herself in her own way. It preserved her from committing herself to a logical and uniform policy, which history has shown to be, in religious matters at any rate, the surest unwisdom. It enabled her to spread over half the civilised world a system of Christianity, agreeable to reason and justified by history, which, with all its imperfections, theoretical and practical, cannot fail to be destined to play a great part in the future, when the time shall come for the healing of divisions, and the gathering together of the divided pieces of the robe of Christ.

The Reformation had, besides, brought with it results to the religious life of England herself, which must have made it difficult in those days to believe that the world was growing better. An observer who judged

the Reformation by the lives of its disciples, instead of by the arguments of its professors, must have pronounced a very unfavourable verdict. The shameless rapacity of the courtiers of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. has passed into a byword. The cruel selfishness of the Protestant landlords, who oppressed the poor and plundered the Church, is now generally acknowledged. Venality among judges, want of principle among statesmen, had never before been so conspicuous. The people of England might well be excused if they preferred the easy-going sluggishness of the monasteries, and the aristocratic listlessness of the bishops of the fifteenth century, or even the coarse, unlettered, and often immoral life of the friar, to the callous, self-seeking cruelty of men like Northumberland or Rich.

Under Elizabeth an improvement came, but it came slowly, and the Queen did but little to forward it. She herself set the example of plundering the Church. Her public conduct, skilful and successful though it was, was marked by mendacity and double-dealing, unique even in that age of diplomatic lying. Her private conduct was, to say the least of it, singularly wanting in self-respect and decorum. Among her courtiers hardly one is found of admitted probity. The most attractive of them, Sir Walter Raleigh, at the crisis of his life met his accusers with a lie. Even the Swiss exiles, on their return to England, anxious though they were to celebrate the glories of the 'wise and religious Queen,' could not fail to notice the sad plight of the Church, especially with regard to the education and numbers of the Clergy. 'I cannot at

The lower-  
ing of  
public  
morals

this time recommend you,' writes Jewel in 1559, 'to send your young men to us, either for a learned or religious education, unless you would have them sent back to you wicked and barbarous.'<sup>1</sup> In the following year Lever writes piteously of the state of the country parishes. 'Many of our parishes have no clergymen, and some dioceses are without a bishop. And out of that very small number who administer the sacraments throughout this great country there is hardly one in a hundred who is both able and willing to preach the word of God.' Three years later, Parkhurst, Bishop of Norwich, writes still more plainly: 'There are in England many good and zealous men; there are many, too, cold, and not a few lukewarm; but, to be plain with you, I fear many evils are hanging over our heads. For almost all are covetous, all love gifts. There is no truth, no liberality, no knowledge of God. Men have broken forth to curse and to lie, and murder and steal and commit adultery. The English indulge in pleasures as if they were to die to-morrow, while they build as if they were to live always. But God grant that we may repent from our inmost soul.' Nor was this verdict really too harsh, though it may seem at first sight to be merely the expression of despair on the part of ecclesiastical officials unable to make men carry out their wishes. The Earl of Sussex writes to Cecil in a similar strain in 1562: 'The people, without discipline, utterly devoid of religion, come to divine service as to a May game; the ministers, for disability and greediness, be had in contempt; and the wise fear more the impiety of the licentious professors than the superstition

<sup>1</sup> Zurich Letters, i. 33, 85.

of the erroneous Papists. God hold His hand over us, that our lack of religious hearts do not breed in the meantime His wrath and revenge upon us.'

Such, then, was the nature of the problem with which Elizabeth, her ministers, and her Bishops had to deal. They bore rule in an organisation which was weakened and discredited by the storm through which it had passed. The majority of those who nominally adhered to it neither understood its principles nor believed its doctrines. The more religious among the nation had either emancipated themselves from its influence, while formally attending its ministrations; or else, disregarding altogether its law, had instituted their own form of worship and taught their own tenets within its pale, in the hope that some day they might confirm by law what they were then engaged in establishing by custom.

The politicians were the only class of the community which were heartily attached to the Church system, and Dependence of the Church upon the Crown they were attached to it, not for the religion which it taught, but for the social order which it maintained, and the assistance which it lent to the Government. The Church, thus torn by internal dissensions, misunderstood and misrepresented by her own children and her own officers, lay helpless in the hands of the Crown. More than once it was saved from dangerous compromise with heresy by the firmness of the Queen herself. This weakness was not altogether distasteful to Elizabeth, for thereby she was assured that her will would be law; yet she could not but feel that if the Church was to be an efficient support to her government, it must present an united front to her

enemies. Whatever dissensions might reign within, to the foreigner and to the enemy must appear the unbroken phalanx of the powers of Church and State united in solid array in the defence of their Queen. The more that political troubles thickened round her, the higher that the waves of the Counter-Reformation gathered and swelled, the more determined Elizabeth became that she would tolerate among her subjects no outward expression of divergence from her government. And more than this, directly she was assured of the loyalty of her subjects, directly she felt that whatever might be their private opinions on matters of religion, on questions of government they realised that her whole heart was bound up with the welfare of England, that she was in the truest sense of the word a national Queen—the embodiment of England's power, the hope of England's glory—she went one step further and forced her subjects to make up their minds as to the grounds of their loyalty, and declare under which king they would live and die. Open enemies she could deal with, secret enemies she would not have if she could help it. Just as Henry VIII. forced men to subscribe a particular theory of the Royal Supremacy, and put them to death if they were unable in conscience to take the particular oath tendered to them, although they were willing enough to obey the Supremacy as a fact; so Elizabeth put men to death because they would not condemn an abstract theory about Papal prerogatives, though they would never stir one finger to assert those prerogatives by act. Uniformity of action in Church and State, based upon identity of thought on the all-important question of loyalty, was the weapon

with which she prepared to meet the open and secret attacks of the forces of the Counter-Reformation led by Pius V., the Guises, and Philip II.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ELIZABETH AND THE ROMAN CATHOLICS.

THE bull drawn up by Pius V. in 1569, in which he pronounced Elizabeth a heretic, excommunicated her, The position of the Papacy in 1569 deposed her, and forbade her people to obey her under pain of excommunication, was a declaration of war. The Counter-Reformation had since the year 1555 been gradually but surely gaining ground. In 1569 the state of Europe seemed to herald its approaching triumph. Philip II. was complete master of his vast dominions, now in the zenith of their wealth and prosperity. The rebellion in the Low Countries was for the moment extinct. In France the Catholic League, under the House of Guise, was in the ascendent. The Council of Trent had lately finished its sittings, and had placed the Roman system on a logical basis, and bound the Roman Catholic world together by adding the doctrine of Papal Supremacy to the creed.

The Pope himself, Pius V., was a man in whose mind religious truth and Papal power were inseparably connected. Within a body small of stature, The character of the Pope and worn with rigid asceticism, burnt the fire of an indomitable energy. Stern, uncompromising,

and unconquerable, he knew no policy toward the heretic but war, no duty but extermination. Under such a leader it was not likely that counsels of moderation would have much place. There was but one power whose existence threatened to check the spread of the faith, and whose conquest would assure the complete ascendancy of the Papal authority. Elizabeth's policy at home was becoming daily more and more hampered by the difficulties which arose through the imprisonment of the Scottish Queen, and by the increase of Puritanism. Abroad, the rivalry with Spain on the coasts of America had almost assumed the proportions of a war. The time for half-measures was over. An opportunity offered which might never occur again. The Pope's mind was made up. Regardless of ulterior consequences to his cause and his followers, he launched the forces of Roman Catholicism upon a war of extermination with England.

The bull of deposition was drawn up in 1569. Its existence was made known to the malcontents in England by Dr. Morton, and did much to foster the rebellion of the northern earls in the autumn of that year. The Guises proposed to Philip II. an alliance of the Roman Catholic powers on behalf of Mary against Elizabeth, and England was only saved from a joint attack by the desire of Philip to put down the Moriscos before he embarked on the English expedition. The ease with which the outbreak of the great families of the north was suppressed, the evident jealousies and personal self-seeking of so many of the rebels, the staunch loyalty of the mass of Englishmen, whatever their religion, were all thrown

Publication  
of the bull  
of deposition

away upon the headstrong Pope. Blind to the fact that no court had thought of altering its relations with Elizabeth, although it was an open secret that the sentence of deposition was prepared, impervious to the remonstrances of politicians like the Emperor Maximilian, who, too late to prevent the promulgation of the bull, wrote to urge its withdrawal before it was printed, Pius determined to prosecute to the end a policy which depended for its success upon the support of the powers of Europe.

The war was to be carried on with the whole forces of the Papacy, both spiritual and temporal. Side by side with the intriguer and the conspirator, The policy of the Pope stirring up disaffection, and no strangers to plots even of assassination, was to go the single-minded missionary, eager only for the salvation of perishing souls. While France and Spain were preparing for an armed invasion, Englishmen were to be converted to the faith. The condition of affairs in England was totally misconceived by the Pope and his advisers. They pictured to themselves a country groaning under the weight of an intolerable tyranny, and anxious to rid itself of the hateful yoke of a State-imposed faith. They found a nation glorying in its liberty, and at least contented with its Church. The England of their imagination was eager to rise on behalf of religion against a perjured and excommunicated sovereign; the England of reality was becoming increasingly Protestant, was rapidly learning to look upon the Pope as the most deadly enemy of its liberty and national greatness, and, whatever were its religious divisions, was conspicuously united in enthusiastic loyalty to its Queen.



Elizabeth on her side prepared to meet the storm by an appeal, not to the loyalty of her subjects, where she was invulnerable, but to the prejudices of Protestantism and the terrors of the law, where all Governments must be weak in the presence of religious zeal. She accepted the gage of battle thrown down by the Pope. If he was prepared to pronounce her deposed from her throne, to declare that no faithful Roman Catholic might profess allegiance to her; and, having thus identified Roman Catholicism with disloyalty, was simultaneously sending missionaries into England to make men Roman Catholics, and stirring up the Continental powers against England, what wonder was there that Elizabeth should take him at his word? She naturally assumed that the converts whom the missionaries made would be obedient to the Pope, and therefore disloyal to herself; and that the missionaries themselves, however holy in their lives and single-minded in their spiritual zeal, were really preachers and teachers of sedition, because they were preachers and teachers of a creed which had identified itself with sedition.

Nevertheless, it is easy to see that Elizabeth's decision was a wrong one. History shows clearly enough that, simply from the point of view of a statesman, without any reference to morals whatever, religious persecution is never successful except at the cost of being so thorough as to defeat its own ends. The outward expression of religious opinion may be stamped out by a system of repression as thoroughgoing as that of the Inquisition in Spain, but it is at the expense of stamping out with it the mental and moral energy necessary

The nature  
of the pro-  
blem before  
Elizabeth

to enable the dominant religion to flourish and expand. Had Elizabeth contented herself with taking proceedings against those only who, whether priests or laymen, whether Roman Catholics or Anglicans, were found to be engaged in plots against herself or against the stability of her throne, the bull of the Pope would have fallen absolutely flat. As it was, but little importance was attached to it until the proceedings were taken against the seminary Priests. It is clear that at Rome considerable dissatisfaction was experienced at the way in which it was received, not only in England, but by the Courts of Europe. If Elizabeth had taken care that in no prosecution instituted by the Government against a Roman Catholic could it be said, with any appearance of truth, that it was the religion of the accused which was being attacked, and not his political conduct, the sympathy of the bulk of the Roman Catholics themselves would have been on the side of the Queen. They would eagerly have resented the imputation of disloyalty, which the ill-advised action of the Pope and his followers was bringing upon them. If, in addition to this, they had found it difficult to provide for themselves the ministrations of their own religion, their condition as a separate body would soon have become intolerable. Zeal, unfed by persecution, would have died away into a reasonable moderation, and the Laudian revival giving them, as it would have done, the sense of identity with the Christianity of the past, which they most ardently desired, would have brought them gradually back into the national Church.

But this was not to be, nor perhaps could so bold and straightforward a policy be expected in times so

difficult. It was safer to meet the strokes of religious division at home and religious war abroad, by the counter-strokes of religious persecution and national uniformity, although the persecution was but skin-deep, and the uniformity but the outward result of penal laws. Each fresh effort on the part of the Pope, or of the less responsible followers of the Papacy, was met by a legislative attack upon the religion which the guilty professed in common with far larger numbers of the innocent; and, as so often happens in such cases, it was the innocent majority that suffered, while the guilty few, for the most part, escaped.

Among the English Roman Catholics were two quite distinct parties. By far the larger part consisted of men who were perfectly loyal to the Government, and who had, as we have seen, been in the habit of conforming to the requirements of the Act of Uniformity. Attendance at church was, however, looked upon with great disfavour at Rome, and it was one of the special objects of the missionary priests, who came from the seminaries of Douai and Rheims, to prevent such conformity. After 1570, it may be said that the Roman Catholics as a rule absented themselves from church in deference to the wishes of the Pope, but refused to follow him in his personal war against Elizabeth, and were not prepared to admit, even if they would not deliberately deny,<sup>1</sup> the validity of her deposition. Among the

<sup>1</sup> That this was the attitude of many Roman Catholics, including several seminary priests, towards the deposing power of the Pope, see Barclay, *De Potestate Papæ*, c. xxx., pp. 115-16. Simpson, *Life of Champon*, pp. 296-97, 302-3.

members of this party may be reckoned the Jesuit Campion and most of the seminary priests; but besides them there was undoubtedly a party, weak in numbers but strong in influence, who were too zealous for their religion and too loyal to the Pope to be good subjects of a heretic Queen—in the words of a Jesuit historian, ‘more warm-hearted than careful.’ Such men could not forget that in the policy of Elizabeth and Cecil the Papacy found its most dangerous obstacle, and that if Elizabeth was once removed, the next heir to the throne was the Roman Catholic Queen of Scotland. Cardinal Allen, the head of the seminary at Rheims, Agazzari, the superior of the English college at Rome, Father Parsons, the leader of the Jesuit mission to England, and Fathers Holt and Creighton, his colleagues, were repeatedly concerned in treasonable negotiations with the Spanish and French ambassadors, which no Government could tolerate. They were privy to the attempt of Sanders and San Giuseppe upon Ireland in 1580. Blinded by their zeal for the Papacy, they deliberately preferred the extension of the power of the Pope to the conversion of individual souls. To them the work of conversion was merely a preliminary to the establishment of Papal supremacy. The overthrow of the heretical Government and the restoration of Papal authority in England, if possible, by the voluntary action of Englishmen, but, if necessary, by the employment of force from abroad, were the real objects of their desire.

Elizabeth, as we have seen, determined to ignore the difference between these two parties, and to treat all Roman Catholics as presumably, as indeed they

were logically, traitors, until they had proved themselves to be loyal. In this policy she was supported by the timidity of the English clergy and the zeal of the Protestant House of Commons. The Act of Supremacy passed in the first year of her reign compelled all beneficed Clergy, all who inherited land, and most of the lay officials of the country, to take an oath acknowledging the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Crown. The Act of Uniformity made the saying of Mass an offence punishable in the last resort by death. In 1562, after the conspiracy of the Poles—which, though ridiculous in itself, showed Elizabeth plainly enough how dangerous a rival Mary of Scotland might be—the necessity of taking the oath of Supremacy was extended to all in a position of trust, such as schoolmasters and attorneys, and to all who disapproved of the Prayer Book or attended Mass. The penalty for the first refusal of the oath was a *præmunire*; that for the second, death. This statute put the lives of nearly all Roman Catholics at the mercy of the Government, but it was intended merely as a political safeguard, and special instructions were issued by Cecil that it was not to be enforced except with his sanction.

In 1568 the seminary at Douai was founded by William Allen for the purpose of training missionaries to effect the conversion of England, and in three years from its foundation it contained no less than 150 students. In 1570 the Pope published his bull of deposition. Elizabeth was now thoroughly frightened, and from that time really dates the beginning of the persecution. In the Parliament

Enactment  
of penal  
laws, 1559-70

Increased  
severity of  
the laws,  
1570-79

of 1571, as the answer of England to the Papal bull, two statutes were passed which were intended to bring all Roman Catholics, who accepted the policy of the Pope, under the penalties of treason; and did in fact bring under those penalties many who acknowledged his spiritual authority, without any reference at all to his power of deposing sovereigns. By the first statute any one who denied the Queen's right to the crown, by writing or express words, or published that she was a heretic, a schismatic, infidel, or tyrant, or who claimed a right to the crown was declared to be guilty of high treason.<sup>1</sup> By the second statute it was also made treason (1) 'for any person to ure or put in use in any place within the Queen's dominions any bull, writing, or instrument of absolution or reconciliation from the Bishop of Rome, or from any other person claiming authority from the said Bishop of Rome; (2) for any person to take upon him by colour of any such bull to absolve or reconcile any person; (3) for any person to willingly receive any such absolution or reconciliation; (4) for any person to obtain from the Bishop of Rome any manner of bull containing anything whatsoever, or to publish such bull; and it was made misprision of treason for any one not to disclose the existence of any such bull; while any person bringing into the realm of England any tokens or things called by the name of Agnus Dei, or any crosses, pictures, or beads from the Bishop of Rome, was made liable to the penalty of *præmunire*.'

Under these statutes a considerable number of persons were committed to prison, and one priest belonging

<sup>1</sup> 13 Eliz. c. 1 & 2.

to the Marian clergy, named Thomas Woodhouse, was put to death for denying the Queen's supremacy. In 1574 the stream of missionaries from the seminaries began to flow. The influence of men so carefully trained, uncompromising in their zeal, and anxious for the crown of martyrdom, was soon felt. Many lukewarm Conformists ceased to attend church. Many who had unwillingly acquiesced in the Elizabethan compromise now boldly avowed themselves at heart adherents of the Roman see. It seemed as if the Papists had suddenly doubled in numbers. The Government determined upon severer measures, and the work of persecution began in earnest. In 1578, Cuthbert Mayne, a seminarist, was executed as a traitor, upon evidence which was admitted by the judge to be wholly presumptive, and would not now be sufficient for the finding of a true bill by the grand jury. The gaols were filled with Roman Catholics who refused to attend church. Many of them died in prison of infectious complaints, but the attack upon them merely increased the zeal of the survivors. In 1579 Gregory XIII. founded the English College at Rome. In 1580 he fitted out and despatched to Ireland a force under Sanders and San Giuseppe, which was to assist the Irish to obtain the independence of their country and the supremacy of their religion.

In 1581, Mercurian, the general of the Jesuits, determined to allow the order to take part in the great work of the conversion of England, and the first Jesuit mission was sent into England under Fathers Parsons and Campion. In order to quiet the scruples of many of the English Roman Catholics

Beginning  
of the perse-  
cution,  
1574-81

The sending  
of the Jesuit  
mission

about the deposing power of the Popes, they procured from Gregory an authoritative statement that no one was expected or required to act upon the bull of Pius V. under the present circumstances—a gloss which left the principle of the bull untouched, or rather admitted.

To meet this new danger more severe laws were called for. In the Parliament of 1582 a statute was passed which made it high treason to ‘withdraw any  
Fresh penal legislation, 1582 of the Queen’s Majesty’s subjects from the religion by her Highness’s authority established within her dominions,’ or ‘to move them to promise any obedience to any pretended authority of the see of Rome, or to be reconciled willingly to the Romish Church;’ and all aiders and abettors of such offences were declared guilty of misprision of treason. Further, any person saying Mass, or willingly hearing Mass said, was made liable to fine and imprisonment; and any person wilfully absenting himself from church for a month was made liable to the payment of a fine of 20*l.* every month until he conformed and made submission.<sup>1</sup>

These precautions were in the eyes of the Government abundantly justified by the repeated intrigues against the throne of Elizabeth, which centred  
Plots against Elizabeth’s life, 1570–85 round the captive Queen of Scots, and of which there now seems little doubt that she was both the victim and the accomplice. In the political war carried on by the Pope and Philip II. against England, plots not only against the crown, but against the life of Elizabeth, played no small part. Even the seminarists who headed the religious war for the conversion of England were not

<sup>1</sup> 23 Eliz. c. 1.



wholly aliens, as we have seen, to treasonable project. As early as 1572, Ridolphi, an Italian banker, and the Bishop of Ross, Mary's agent, had been engaged in a negotiation with Philip and the Pope, which seems distinctly to have aimed at the life of Elizabeth as well as at the overthrow of her government. In 1580 occurred the invasion of Ireland by the Papal and Spanish forces. In 1581, Allen, the head of the seminary at Rheims, now rewarded for his zeal with a cardinal's hat, Parsons, the head of the Jesuit mission in England, Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, Mathieu, the provincial of the French Jesuits, and the Duke of Guise, entered into a conspiracy to place Mary on the throne of England. In 1584, Arden and Throgmorton, two Roman Catholic gentlemen, were convicted upon questionable evidence of having been privy to this foreign plot. During the past three years as many as twenty-five persons, chiefly Priests, but including some laymen and some women, had been put to death for presumed treason in refusing to acknowledge the Royal Supremacy. The existence of real plots against the life and government of the Queen, known to some of the leaders of the seminarist movement, fostered by the ambassadors of France and Spain, and possibly approved by the Pope himself, had been made abundantly manifest. The nation was in a frenzy of fear and excitement as the great death-struggle of England and the Counter-Reformation approached its crisis.

In the Parliament of 1585 fresh measures of severity were introduced, directed especially against the seminarists, whose head, Cardinal Allen, had been the chief contriver of the plot of 1583. All Jesuits, seminary

priests, and other priests of the Roman Church were ordered to leave the country within forty days under the penalty of high treason. All who should become seminarists after the passing of the statute, were declared traitors unless they returned to England within six months and took the oath of supremacy. All who knowingly relieved or harboured any Jesuit or seminary priest were declared guilty of felony and liable to suffer death. All who willingly gave money or relief to any Jesuit or seminary priest, or for the support of any seminary or Jesuit college, were declared liable to a *præmunire*. Finally, those who, knowing that any Jesuit or seminary priest was in the realm, did not give information to the magistrates were to be punished by fine and imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> Two years later another statute empowered the Queen to enter upon the lands of any recusant who was in arrear with his 20*l.* fine, and appropriate all his personalty and two-thirds of his real property by way of forfeiture.<sup>2</sup> In 1586 occurred Babington's conspiracy, in which Ballard, a Roman Catholic priest, Morgan, and many other well-known members of the younger section of Roman Catholics were all implicated, and which undoubtedly included in its scope the murder of the Queen. It was the discovery of this plot that finally determined Elizabeth to listen to the counsels of Walsingham, and to put Mary to death as the only way of preserving her own life and monarchy. It was the death of Mary that finally brought matters to a crisis and led to the Spanish Armada.

Directly the political and religious war that had

<sup>1</sup> 27 Eliz. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 29 Eliz. c. 6.

Increased  
severity of  
the law,  
1585-87

been waged so long between Elizabeth and the Counter-Reformation left the byways of conspiracy and intrigue for the straightforward path of simple conquest, the internal difficulty lost half of its terrors. As long as the foreign enemies of Elizabeth's throne were using the differences of religious belief among Elizabeth's subjects to clothe a political aggression with the garb of a missionary work, and as long as the Government was determined to meet that aggression by a counter attack upon difference of religious belief, it was impossible for a Roman Catholic to be at once faithful to his religion and loyal to the Queen ; it was impossible for the Government to treat the denial of the Royal Supremacy except as an admission of traitorous conviction. Directly the Pope and Philip II. directed the Armada against the shores of England, the difficulty hitherto so insoluble was solved. Men who were unable theoretically to subscribe to the supremacy of the Queen, because it militated against that of the Pope, had no difficulty in defending with their lives the throne of the Queen against the organised attack of the Pope. The Government, which felt bound to treat all Roman Catholics as the traitors which the Pope would have them to be, had no difficulty in accepting the assistance of men whom they knew as a fact to be thoroughly loyal. So it happened that during the terrible year 1588, when the freedom of England and of Europe was trembling in the balance, not one English Roman Catholic increased the peril of his country by forgetting the duties of patriotism in his zeal for the spread of his religion.

Elizabeth made but a poor return for such devotion. Directly the danger of the Armada was over, the pro-

secutions under the penal laws began afresh. It appeared as if the Government were determined to prove that it was not the political but the religious belief of its subjects that it was attacking. The throne of Elizabeth was now safe from the armed attempts of Pope or Jesuit. Though her person was still in danger from plots of assassination, those plots were now the work of a small section of obscure fanatics, and were no longer countenanced by ambassadors or hatched by cardinals. Nevertheless, the penal laws were put into force relentlessly.

By an Act passed in 1593 recusants were forbidden to move more than five miles from their usual place of abode under pain of forfeiture.<sup>1</sup> The recusancy fines were rigorously imposed, and the gaols became so full of recusants that serious complaints were made by the magistrates of the expense which fell upon the country in consequence. Domiciliary visits by pursuivants and priest-hunters were frequent, and were peculiarly galling to the pride of the Roman Catholic gentry. Between the date of the defeat of the Armada and the death of the Queen, over one hundred persons, including a considerable number of laymen and two women, suffered death under one section or another of the penal laws. Although some of these may have been guilty of harbouring treasonable designs, the vast majority of them were prosecuted for simply obeying their ordinary religious duties.

The main fault of the Acts was that they drew no distinction between the guilty and the innocent. The political agitator who circulated copies of the bull of

<sup>1</sup> 35 Eliz, c. 2.

deposition among the disaffected, and the humble Roman Catholic Priest, who absolved and reconciled to the Church those whom he believed had fallen into heresy, and even the man who, when publicly asked in a court of law whether he believed that the Queen was a heretic, could not conscientiously say that in his opinion she was not, were all confused together under a general charge of high treason. In a crisis as severe as that through which England was passing, it may have been necessary for the Legislature to arm the Government with weapons so doubly edged in their nature; but if so, it was the bounden duty of the Government to take special care to whom the use of such weapons was entrusted. The real weight of the accusation of religious persecution brought against Elizabeth's government and the Church of England does not lie so much in the nature of the penal legislation, severe though no doubt it was, as in the way in which that legislation was used. Exceptional legislation of this character, put in force by spies, informers, and priest-hunters, like Topcliffe and his associates, and resulting in the conviction and death of some 200 men and women as traitors, against two-thirds of whom not one single piece of evidence of an overt act of treason was even alleged, cannot be looked upon in any other light than as legislation used by the Government, if not intended by Parliament, for purposes of persecution.

By treating the problem of religious division, as it presented itself on the Roman Catholic side, by the simple remedy of persecution, the Government of Elizabeth laid up for itself and for the Church of England in the future the heritage of a constant menace and of an

unreasoning fear. The strength of Roman Catholicism in England has lain since the days of Elizabeth, partly in the magnificent unhistorical assumption of monopoly, illustrated so strikingly by the 'Tu es Petrus,' which in gigantic letters of purple mosaic decorates the dome of the great basilica of the Vatican; partly in the tradition and solidity which attach to a system and an institution like that of the Papacy, so venerable, so romantic, so successful; but far more in the perseverance and quiet endurance of two hundred and fifty years of steady repression varied only by outbursts of childish persecution, which has characterised the history of the English Roman Catholics. Men have felt irresistibly drawn to a religion which has suffered so much and done so much. They have been attracted by its misfortunes and its reality. It has been logical yet interesting, cosmopolitan yet personal. Nevertheless it has throughout its history been felt distinctly to be foreign. That it has been organised as a system outside of, and in many respects antagonistic to, the national life, and for many years a constant menace to the Church and the Government of England, is due in the first place to Pius V. and Gregory XIII., and in the second place to the policy of religious persecution which Elizabeth adopted and the Church supported, as the best weapon with which to meet the attacks directed against her.

## CHAPTER III.

## ELIZABETH AND THE PURITANS.

WHILE Elizabeth, with the nation at her back, was thus battling to the death, not always wisely, but always manfully and successfully, against foreign aggression and internal sedition, she was threatened with another difficulty at home, which was eventually to prove far more formidable to her system of government than any danger from abroad. During the years which had elapsed since her accession, religious opinion in England had been fast becoming more and more Calvinistic. The bulk of the Clergy, brought up amid the disputes and the doubts of the Reformation, had learned contentedly to acquiesce in every form of worship prescribed by authority which was reasonably orthodox, and had found it impossible to be enthusiastic about any. As we have seen, the devout among the Englishmen of the times of Edward and Mary had naturally been drawn towards the two extremes of Rome and Geneva. After the accession of Elizabeth this tendency became even more marked. Elizabeth had succeeded in inducing some of the Marian exiles, who had taken refuge at Basel and Zurich to accept Bishoprics; but a measure which was necessary to preserve the appearance of unity was fatal to interior discipline. Diocese differed from diocese in the doctrine taught and the forms used. In days when uniformity was the policy of all parties, and toleration of

The spread  
of Calvin-  
ism

differences was considered inadmissible—while the Roman system presented to the devout an assumption of monopoly which dazzled the intellect, and a reality of devotion which won the heart; while Calvinism offered a masterful logic which enslaved the mind, and an organised discipline which dominated the will—the Church of England held out but a doubtful and hesitating compromise, which none of its own defenders pretended as yet to be more than tolerable, and about which there seemed to be nothing certain or permanent except the Royal Supremacy and the High Commission Court. It was not therefore surprising that the younger Clergy, trained under Elizabeth, in the full glow of the death-struggle with Spain, secure of the sympathy of many of the Bishops, and the support of Leicester and Cecil at the council-table, should have ardently embraced the only logical and definite religious system that was presented to them.

Elizabeth herself was no theologian and despised theological disputation, but she was an uncompromising disciplinarian; and when the Calvinism thus spreading quickly over the land, and annexing to itself most of what was honest and real in the English Church, moved forward from being a system of belief confined to the mind, to being a system of religious discipline which was to be put into practice, it ran counter to her most cherished principles of order and of religion. She saw in it, as James I. saw in it afterwards, a system incompatible with, because rival to, monarchy; a system equally imperious, equally infallible, and more divine. She found herself accordingly threatened on both sides at once. Abroad, Pius V. and

Its danger  
to the Go-  
vernment



Philip II. were directing the forces of the Counter-Reformation against her as the leader and protector of the Protestant heretics, while she herself was espousing the cause of Calvinists by supporting the Dutch against Philip II., and the Huguenots against the Guises. At home, she was passing penal laws against Protestant heretics who separated from the Church, and was directing all the force of her government to check the spread of Calvinist organisation.

Both the Calvinist problem and the Roman Catholic problem were met with the same weapon of religious uniformity, but in dealing with the former she was on much safer ground. However severe her enforcement of conformity might be, there was no fear that she would forfeit the confidence of the Calvinists as long as she continued to be the champion of Protestantism abroad. More than this, there was no need for her in her war against the Calvinists to pry closely into the opinions they held, provided they were conformable; for there was nothing necessarily opposed to her government in their opinions, though there might be much in their organisation. It was nonconformity, not Calvinism, that she dreaded. Just in the same way, there was no reason why a Calvinist should not be conformable, unless he happened to live in a parish where the full ceremonial of the Church was rigidly insisted upon. In by far the larger number of parishes, as we see from the Bishop's Visitation articles, the difficulty was to exact even the minimum of ceremonial allowed in the Advertisements of 1565; and in that minimum there was nothing retained which had not received the sanction of the Calvinist theologians at

Zurich and Basel. The enforcement of religious uniformity by Elizabeth against Roman Catholic and Calvinist was subject, therefore, to an important difference: the Roman Catholics were proceeded against for their opinions, because their opinions not only prevented them from obeying the law, but had also been made incompatible with loyalty by the Pope; but the Calvinists were proceeded against principally because they organised themselves into bodies which were consciously or unconsciously in rivalry with the Church, and might possibly be dangerous to the Government.

We have already seen that on the accession of Elizabeth many Protestants agreed to accept the Prayer Book and obey Episcopal government, because

Formation  
of a Calvinist  
party in the  
Church

they looked upon the compromise enforced by Elizabeth as by no means final, but merely a step towards a more complete reformation in the future. As time went on, and Protestant opinions in the extreme form of Calvinism spread rapidly over the land, became dominant at the Universities, and commanded the allegiance of most of the earnest and the intellectual among the younger clergy, this party naturally increased greatly, both in number and importance. It was found by experience that many of the evils anticipated by the leaders of the party from the retention of so much of what they considered to be superstitious in doctrine and ceremonial in the Elizabethan Prayer Book and Injunctions, had no foundation in fact. In spite of the efforts of the Queen and some of the Bishops, opinion was so divided at the council-table, and even on the Episcopal bench, that it was impossible, except in isolated instances, to enforce the law as it stood. What-

ever might be the teaching and the discipline laid down in the formularies of the Church, as a matter of fact the Calvinists were actually enjoying the freedom of that fuller reformation to which they had looked forward. All that was now wanting to reduce the Church of England to the 'pattern of the best reformed Churches' and make the law of the Church agree with the practice of the majority of Churchmen. On the other hand, it was the object of Elizabeth, and after her of Whitgift, of Bancroft, and of Laud, to make the practice of Churchmen agree with the law of the Church. Here in a nutshell lies the secret of the whole internal difficulties of the Church during the seventeenth century.

Two parties quickly evolved themselves out of the mass of Englishmen who held Calvinistic opinions; namely, those who were willing to conform to the requirements of the Queen, and those who were not. To both is often given indiscriminately by historians the name of Puritan, but it seems more correct, and certainly is more convenient, to restrict the use of this name to those who are sometimes called conforming Puritans—namely, to those who, holding Calvinistic doctrines foreign to the teaching of the Church, and using a ceremonial for the most part contrary to the law of the Church, nevertheless claimed to be faithful members and true representatives of the Church, not for what she was, but for what they fully believed she intended, and was going, to be. These are the men who played so large a part in the ecclesiastical struggles of the reign of Charles I.; men who derived much of their influence in the nation from their close

The Puritans

union with the party of liberty in Parliament; men who were willing to tolerate an Episcopal and sacerdotal Church system as long, and as long only, as it abstained from asserting its principles, and was capable of being worked in their own interests. To the other party fitly belongs the name of Nonconformist. The Non-conformists They were men who carried their Calvinist principles a little further, and added to the negations of their Protestant creed either a belief in Presbyterianism as the divinely ordered system of Church government, or such a conscientious abhorrence of Episcopacy and Church order as made them consider obedience to it to be a positive sin.

It was against Nonconformist organisation that Elizabeth's efforts were chiefly directed. The Bishops The enforcement of conformity were the officers charged with the execution of her wishes. Throughout the struggle we find them continually petitioning the Queen to call in the power of Parliament to enforce the conformity she desired. This the Queen saw readily enough was merely because they themselves were lukewarm in the cause, and wished to see the burden shifted on other shoulders, so with equal determination she called upon them to put in force the powers they had got before they demanded others. And, indeed, those powers were amply sufficient. By the Act of Uniformity (1559) the Prayer Book had been incorporated into an Act of Parliament, and the ceremonial prescribed by that book was legally binding upon all Clergy. It was true that by the Advertisements of 1565 the simpler ceremonial of the use of the cope in cathedrals, and of the surplice in parish churches, had been permitted instead of that of

the chasuble and of the other Eucharistic vestments enjoined by the Act; but the Advertisements were not of statutory force, and only represented the policy which the Bishops found it expedient at that time to adopt. By the same Act, to be absent from the parish church on Sunday was a punishable offence. By the Act of Supremacy of 1559, as amended in 1562, the Bishops were empowered to require any suspected person to take the oath of supremacy, and repeated refusal incurred the penalty of treason. By virtue of the 8th section of the Act of 1559 the Court of High Commission was established, which had especial cognizance of all acts which in any way contravened the Queen's supremacy or ecclesiastical law.

Conformity to the Church, both by attendance at her services and none other, and obedience to her laws, was prescribed by Act of Parliament, and guarded by the ancient jurisdiction of the Episcopal and Archiepiscopal courts, and the new and more formidable engine of the High Commission. When it is remembered that since the days of Henry VIII. it had been usual for courts to treat disobedience to ecclesiastical law as an offence against the Supremacy, and so to bring contumacious disobedience under the treason laws, and that excommunication, which was the severest punishment known to the spiritual courts, involved imprisonment, it will not probably be thought that the weapons ready to the hands of the Bishops for the enforcement of discipline were either too rusty or too blunt for the purpose. The struggle, therefore, took the form throughout of a disciplinary war between the Bishops, armed with the statutory terrors of the High Commission Court and the

royal prerogative, and the Calvinist Nonconformists, strong in their conviction of personal infallibility, and supported by the sympathy of the whole Puritan party, and even of some of the Bishops themselves. The Queen herself carefully kept in the background; and though she was really urging the enforcement of conformity, the odium did not fall on her. The Bishops, by consenting to act merely as the henchmen of the Government—the royal officers for the carrying out of that department of the royal policy—fitly brought upon themselves and their order the hatred of their fellow-countrymen, who saw in them, not the fathers and leaders of religion, but the exponents and enforcers of law.

The war began in the enforcement by Archbishop Parker in 1565 of the Advertisements as containing the minimum of ceremonial that would be tolerated. In 1566 the clergy of London were required to make the declaration of conformity which was appended to the Advertisements, and thirty-seven were suspended or deprived for refusal. Some of the deprived ministers continued to conduct services and preach in spite of their deprivation, and so were formed the first bodies of Nonconformists organised in England. In 1567 more than one hundred of these Nonconformists were seized at Plumber's Hall and imprisoned, but it was soon found impossible to check the spread of their meetings by law. They formed a centre at Wandsworth. They formulated their opinions and published their grievances in a literature of tracts which poured forth all over the country, and soon learning to turn against the whole system of the Church the objections which

Measures of  
Parker

they had originally entertained only against some ceremonies, they took up a position of conscientious hostility to the Church, from which it was impossible to dislodge them except by the unlikely means of conversion or the impossible one of expatriation.

The objections against the Church system thus formulated sprang from two very different sources, and led to the formation of the two great Calvinistic bodies which we find opposed to the Church during the civil war, and which constituted the bulk of the Nonconformist party at the Restoration, *i.e.* the Independents and the Presbyterians.

Robert Browne, a relative of Lord Burghley, and a clergyman beneficed in the eastern counties, became convinced of the wickedness of remaining in a Church which retained an Episcopal organisation. Asserting the principle that each congregation was a law to itself, he formed throughout the country bodies of Christians organised on the Congregational or, as it was then called, the Independent model, to whom separation was the first of duties, inasmuch as the separate congregation, and not the visible Church, was the true ark of salvation. Browne himself, after having been frequently imprisoned, fled to Holland; but when there he again changed his opinions, conformed to the Church, and ended his days in the possession of his English benefice.

In Browne is seen the worst side of the Nonconformists. In Barrow and Johnson, who are the real founders of Independency, is seen the better and more spiritual side. Underneath the disputes about ceremonial and about Church discipline, underlying the

accusations so freely cast against the Clergy that they were dumb dogs, an unpreaching ministry, against the Bishops that they were lordly prelates and greedy wolves, beneath even the scurrility of the Martin Marprelate tracts, can be discerned a true religious principle. The yearning after a more direct communion between God and the soul than was offered by a Church which had for the time deposed the Sacraments from their place in the Christian system, was trying to find expression in a sense of personal election and individual mission.

This desire for a true spiritual religion, which drove the more earnest and uncompromising of the Calvinists, like the followers of Browne and of Barrow, The Prophesyings into separation from the Church and exile from their country, led among the Puritan party in the Church to the meetings known as Prophesyings, or Exercises. 'The ministers within a precinct' (says Bacon in describing them) 'did meet upon a week day in some principal town where there was some ancient grave minister that was president, and an auditory admitted of gentlemen or other persons of leisure. Then every minister successively, beginning with the youngest, did handle one and the same part of Scripture, spending severally some quarter of an hour or better, and in the whole some two hours: and so, the exercise being begun and concluded with prayer, and the president giving a text for the next meeting, the assembly was dissolved. And this was, as I take it, a fortnight's exercise; which, in my opinion, was the best way to frame and train up preachers to handle the word of God as it ought to be handled, that hath been practised.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bacon, *Considerations on the Pacification of the Church*.



It was the misfortune of the Church under Queen Elizabeth to be compelled to suppress all efforts of religious zeal, at a time when she herself was lamentably deficient in spiritual power. Archbishop Grindal, Parkhurst, Bishop of Norwich, and others among the Bishops, looking upon the Prophesyings merely as Bacon did afterwards from their religious side, as devotional meetings for the edification of the Clergy and the better understanding of the Scriptures, welcomed them as a step towards the renewal of spiritual life. They issued instructions for their regulation, and even refused to obey the Queen's order for their suppression. Elizabeth, in her hearty dislike of theological controversy, and her suspicion of possible development in a political direction, looked upon the Prophesyings as dangerous gatherings of disaffected spirits, which, when stirred by the religious zeal evoked by controversy, could not fail to increase the difficulties already so formidable in the way of her policy of religious uniformity. In 1576 she issued her instructions to the Bishops for their suppression. Grindal refused to obey, and addressed a letter of remonstrance to the Queen which was couched in terms of severe rebuke, and even went the length of recalling the quarrel between Ambrose and Theodosius. By an act of high-handed prerogative the Archbishop was sequestered for five years for his disobedience, but during that time he still received the emoluments and discharged many of the ordinary duties of his office. Before his death a reconciliation was effected, which put an end to an incident alike creditable to the courage of the Archbishop and the temper of the Queen. It is easy to imagine

Their suppression by Elizabeth

the way in which Henry VIII. or Louis XIV. would have treated so plain-spoken an adviser.

A far more serious danger than that from the Prophesyings threatened the Church from the deliberate attempt made by the Puritans towards the end of Elizabeth's reign to introduce the Genevan discipline under cover of the formularies of the Church. Unlike the Brownists and Barrowists, who maintained a different form of polity from that of the Church, and when it was not accepted by the Bishops formed separate organisations of their own to carry it out; unlike the advocates of the Prophesyings, who merely added to the authorised public services of the Church unauthorised and private devotional meetings; these Puritans tried to erect a system of Presbyterian discipline inside the pale of the Church. By rendering an outward conformity to the law in order to avoid persecution, under cover of that conformity they sought to establish a separate disciplinary machinery of their own which should supersede that of the Church. It was, therefore, little less than an attempt to revolutionise—or rather, as it would appear to them, to develope the reformation of the Church by a subtle and underhand policy, instead of attempting to do it through the ordinary machinery of Convocation and Parliament. It was all the more dangerous from the strong sympathy which the attempt met with from the neighbouring Presbyterianism just established in Scotland, and the dominant Calvinism of Protestant Europe.

As early as 1571, Thomas Cartwright, the Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, was expelled from

the University through the instrumentality of Whitgift, the Vice-Chancellor, for his advocacy of Presbyterian principles. In 1572, in conjunction with other divines, he published two addresses to Parliament, under the title of the first and second Admonitions, which contained an elaborate attack upon the Church, and asserted strongly the divine origin of the Genevan discipline. In 1580, Cartwright and Travers, who though a graduate of Cambridge had only received Presbyterian ordination abroad, published the Book of Discipline, in which the Genevan system was adapted to the needs of England, and which was intended to form an authorised scheme of Church government for the Puritan party. In 1582 the system was formally established in full working order. A board of Puritan Clergy was formed in each district called a *classis* or conference, and provision was made for the consolidation of these *classes* into a national assembly, which should meet in London at the time of the session of Parliament. In each parish was to be formed a consistory, which should include lay members elected for that purpose; but the real direction of the movement lay entirely in the hands of the *classis*. To it appertained the power of deciding in each particular case how much or how little of the ceremonial required by law the minister might be permitted to use, and to it was entrusted the still more important task of deciding on the qualification of candidates for the ministry and of giving them their 'call.' When the *classis* had thus conferred Presbyterian orders upon a man, he was directed to apply to the Bishop for the legal rite. In this way a complete Church system on the Presbyterian

Attempt to  
establish  
the Presby-  
terian  
system

model was formed, which was to work in obedience to the Church system already established, by treating it as a mere legal appendage, until the time came when, undermined from below, it might be successfully and entirely overthrown.

From the first, therefore, there was a strong distinction visible between the Independents and the Presbyterians. The origin of the one was to be found wholly in religious conviction, that of the other was tainted with political motives. The one demanded scope for the free expansion of the soul towards God, in accordance with the sacred dictates of private judgment. The other sought to impose upon all a system as infallible, as sacerdotal, and far more narrow than that of Rome; 'for presbyter is but old priest writ large.'

The strength of the Independents lay in a distinctly spiritual conception of the nature of religion. To them private judgment was so sacred, and the 'spirit' of religion so vital, that all forms or organisation appeared of necessity to cramp the free action of the soul, and to come fatally between man and God. To the 'sectaries,' as they were soon emphatically called, not merely the Church system, but any system at all, was contrary to true religion. They believed in the Calvinistic doctrines of election and reprobation, and in the Calvinistic view of the Sacraments; but the essential principle of their religion lay rather in the strong sense of the personal tie between God and the soul than in any theological conception of the way in which that tie was formed, and the limitations to which it was subject. This individualism led them

Difference  
between the  
Independ-  
ents and  
the Presby-  
terians

The spiritual  
character of  
early Inde-  
pendency

into difficulties with the Queen and the Bishops, and the mere existence of those difficulties was sufficient to show them how incompatible with their beliefs was an Episcopal form of Church government. They were thus led on to an attack upon Episcopacy, in which they found themselves acting in concert with the Presbyterians, but on very different grounds. The one asserted strenuously the right of the individual soul, or of the individual congregation, to settle for itself, as it were, the terms of its communion with God. It denied strenuously the right of the civil power to interfere with relations so sacred and personal. The other believed that outside of the Genevan discipline and the Presbyterian system was no salvation, and wished to enforce that belief upon others by means of the civil power. Both agreed in an irreconcilable hostility to Episcopacy, the one because it wanted to abolish all systems, the other because it wanted to establish the Presbyterian system.

In the stress which it laid upon the spiritual character of religion, Independency found itself allied to, and perhaps in some cases the parent of, more mystical developments of religious zeal, which were very far removed from the doctrines of Calvin. Whenever men's minds are deeply stirred by religious emotion, a mystical and transcendental view of religion is sure to win its way into prominence among the more spiritually-minded of mankind. The teaching of Love is opposed to the teaching of Law, the consolations of communion with the Divine to the satisfaction of obedience. Usually such manifestations of the mystical spirit have been

Mystical  
develop-  
ments of In-  
dependency

developed within the pale of the Church; but in the sixteenth century, partly perhaps as a reaction against the more forbidding parts of the Calvinistic creed, partly as a natural expression of a true longing for union with God, many sects arose whose tenets were founded upon a mystical view of Christianity. Among the more important of these sects were the Family of Love, founded in 1541 by Henry Niclaes of Munster, and the Mennonite Baptists, founded by Menno Simons in Holland about the year 1537. Freed from the safeguard of Catholic tradition and principle, they soon degenerated into fanaticism, but they had a considerable following in England, and exercised an appreciable influence upon George Fox and the early Quakers.

It was to the Mennonite Churches of Holland that such developments of the spirit of Independency in England were chiefly due. Many of the English followers of Barrow took refuge with them in Amsterdam or at New Plymouth from the attacks of Whitgift, but until the time of the Commonwealth their history belongs rather to Holland than to England.<sup>1</sup> In the England of Elizabeth there was little room for the manifestation of any religious enthusiasm whatsoever. The policy which put an end to the Prophesyings was equally directed to the expatriation of the zealous Independents and the suppression of the rival Presbyterians.

<sup>1</sup> The connexion between English Independency and the mystical Protestant sects of Holland, and their influence upon the rise of Quakerism, is well worked out in Barclay's *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*.

Of this policy Whitgift, the adversary of Cartwright at Cambridge, who succeeded Grindal in the primacy in 1583, is the foremost exponent. He was the leader of the school to which most prominent members of the Church of England belonged at that time. A Calvinist in doctrine, although himself content with the formularies of the Church as they stood, he was willing to go some lengths towards meeting the difficulties of the Puritans in matters of faith. To him the great struggle with Spain, which was now approaching its climax, was the all-absorbing fact which decided all questions of politics and religion. England was to him the last refuge and the staunchest champion of Protestantism and freedom. To be untrue to England's Queen, to be in opposition to England's Government, was to be on the side of the enemy. Conformity to the law, ecclesiastical and civil, was the first duty, not only of every good citizen, but of every good Protestant. Nonconformist scruples were little better than rank treachery.

Such a position was one with which all could sympathise during a great national crisis, but it was not the sort of reasoning upon which the policy of the Church, with regard either to Puritans or Nonconformists, could be based for all time. Whitgift himself seems to have felt this. His acceptance of the Lambeth Articles of 1595 was probably intended as the first step in a policy which was to reconcile the Puritans to the Church and render them innocuous to the Government. By assimilating the doctrines of the Church to the dominant Calvinism, but retaining the form of Episcopal discipline, he sought to establish a

system more consonant to monarchy than that of the 'Genevan platform.' The event proved that the Archbishop had underestimated the strength of orthodoxy in the nation, or at any rate had pitched his note too high. The Calvinism of the Articles was too pronounced for statesmen like the Queen and Burghley to accept, and was abhorrent to the rising school of theologians represented by Andrewes and Overall. To the former, such statements as those contained in the first and last of the Articles, '*That God from eternity hath predestinated some to life, some He hath reprobated to death,*' and that '*it is not placed in the will or power of every man to be saved,*' seemed to be a direct incentive to lawlessness. 'They were charging God with cruelty,' said Burghley, 'and might make men desperate in their wickedness.' To Andrewes the whole scheme of the Articles, propounding as they did a most rigid statement of capricious election and reprobation by God, irrespective of the efforts of man, seemed to be opposed to the doctrine of the Incarnation, as it had always been taught in the Catholic Church. Whitgift accordingly, finding himself in opposition to the Court, and to much of the religious feeling of the nation, was content to let the matter drop, and hand on to his successors the Puritan difficulty still unsolved.

Meanwhile he was uncompromising in his efforts to rid the Church of Nonconformists. Whatever might be eventually done by authority to meet their reasonable difficulties in the matter of doctrine, nothing could excuse them from the obligation of obedience to the law as it stood. In 1583 he compelled all who exercised any ecclesiastical juris-

Repressive  
measures  
against Non-  
conformists



diction to subscribe to the Royal Supremacy, the Prayer Book, and the Thirty-nine Articles. He obtained fuller powers for the High Commission Court to deal with offenders, by which the court was empowered to tender an oath (usually known as the oath *ex officio*) to all persons suspected of Nonconformity, pledging them to an *ex animo* acceptance of the Church system. These proceedings naturally raised a storm of opposition among the Puritans. Urged on by Leicester, the Puritan party in 1584 made an unsuccessful effort to procure the sanction of Parliament to Cartwright's Book of Discipline. The attempt failed, partly through the readiness shown by the Primate to effect reforms in the Church in procuring the passing of the canons of that year, and partly through the opposition of the Queen and Burghley; yet it was well known that Whitgift's uncompromising policy was looked upon with no great favour at the council-table, and that Burghley himself had described the procedure as in his 'simple judgment too much savouring of the Roman Inquisition, and rather a device to seek for offenders than to reform any.' Secure, however, of Elizabeth's support, and fully convinced in his own mind of the justice of his cause, the Archbishop persisted.

In 1583 two Independents, named Copper and Thacker, were executed for libels against the Queen's Government, perpetrated by circulating the writings of Robert Browne. In 1590 Cartwright and sixteen other ministers were committed to prison for refusing to take the *ex officio* oath. In 1591 and 1593, Nicholas Udal and William Penny were condemned, and the latter executed, for taking part in the

Persecution  
of Noncon-  
formists

libels of the Martin Marprelate controversy. The prisons were soon filled with men who from conscientious scruples refused to take the required oaths, although many of them were quite willing to conform in fact. Some were kept in prison for years, and apparently even tortured, in the vain hope of thus inducing them to obey the law. It soon became apparent that persecution of this sort was just as certain to fail in its object, when applied to the religious zeal of the Protestant Nonconformist, as when applied to that of the Jesuits and Seminary priests. Taught by experience, Elizabeth and her ministers were afraid of increasing the evil they sought to destroy by continuing to people the prisons with sufferers for religion's sake. They determined to adopt the safer expedient of driving away the disease they could not cure. In 1593, Elizabeth at last yielded to the demands which had been so continuously urged by the Bishops, and invoked the authority of Parliament to enforce and increase their disciplinary powers.

A statute was passed<sup>1</sup> which provided that any person obstinately refusing to repair to church for the space of a month without lawful cause, or being present at any unlawful assemblies under pretence of religious exercise, should make submission in the form provided by the Act, and on refusing to make such submission should suffer banishment. This statute made Nonconformity a matter to be dealt with by the judges at common law, instead of by the Bishops in the courts ecclesiastical, and the Nonconformists very soon found out the difference.

Presbyterianism had really never had much hold

<sup>1</sup> 35 Eliz. c. 1.

The Statute  
of banish-  
ment

even over its apologists. They were actuated much more by a dislike of the Episcopal regimen than by a devotion to Presbyterianism, and they readily fell back into the indistinguishable mass of conforming Puritans when they found themselves face to face with the whole powers of the Government. They were content to wait for the time when the death of Elizabeth should give them, as they hoped, a sovereign after their own heart, trained in the purest principles of Scotch Presbyterianism. The Independents, left to themselves, were obliged to give way before a storm which they could not weather. Conscientious to the last, they left the land which would no longer afford them protection except at the cost of their principles. Most of them went to Holland, where they found a field of Calvinistic controversy open to them, which was thoroughly congenial to their pragmatic spirit; some of them to North America with the Queen's sanction, and even approbation, for it was only in England that she thought it necessary, for the safety of her throne, to allow no religion but her own. During the rest of Elizabeth's reign she was free from difficulties of Non-conformity.

In reviewing the religious condition of the nation during the reign of Elizabeth, we cannot fail to be struck by the progress which the spirit of Puritanism has made. There can be no doubt on which side the victory lay, if the struggle between authority and private judgment, which we have been recording, is looked upon as the struggle between the principles of the Church and the principles of Puritanism. It is more correct, perhaps, to look upon it as the

Estimate of  
Whitgift's  
work

struggle between the principles of uniformity and of division, and from that point of view the verdict might be different. It is Whitgift's great merit that he preserved the framework of the ecclesiastical constitution. There was a real danger that the whole structure might fall, that an irreparable breach might be made with the Christianity of the past, and that England might be given over to be the prey of hundreds of sects, too much occupied with their own rivalries to bestow a thought upon the weakness of a divided nation. From this catastrophe the fearless and uncompromising disciplinarian saved his country. Without sympathy with the higher aspirations of Churchmen, without any intellectual conception of the historical continuity of the Church, such as that which sustained Andrewes and Laud in the moments of deepest depression, Whitgift brought to her service, just at the time when it was most wanted, an indomitable will and a resistless energy which was determined that, come what might in the future, he at least would hand over to his successors the ecclesiastical system of the country unimpaired. Thus he preserved the foundation upon which others in happier times could build.

But though the framework of the ecclesiastical constitution was preserved, though the foundation yet remained unimpaired, the structure of religion raised among thinking men in Elizabeth's time extended far outside the old limits. Religious England, outwardly Catholic, was inwardly Puritan. The best, the purest, the noblest of Elizabethan heroes were Puritans. The more energetic of the great Universities was steeped in Puritanism. The most typical

Growth of  
Puritanism

poet of the Elizabethan age was a Puritan. Even to George Herbert, in the full flood of the Laudian movement a few years later, it seemed that the old Christianity which he loved so well was leaving England, though possibly to bear still more glorious fruits in the unknown West.

Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,  
Ready to pass to the American strand.

If we inquire where the strength of this great movement lay, why with so much of pride, of assurance, Principles of the movement of intolerance, which is so plainly visible, Puritanism yet enlisted in its service so many of the noblest minds, obtained so complete a control over the hearts of men, commanded so easily and so thoroughly their devotion and their self-surrender, we shall find it in two great principles—the insistence upon the personal relation between God and man, and the hatred of a professional religion. If we want to see what Puritanism really was in its better aspects, we must go, not to the libels of Martin Marprelate or the disputations of Cartwright, but to the writings of Spenser and of Milton, to the lives and thoughts of Eliot, of Winthrop, and of Pym. In all alike is im- Hatred of ecclesiastical abuses planted the deep inextinguishable hatred of a corrupt Clergy, who traffic in holy things for their own benefit, and all of them, with too much of reason, pointed to such a Clergy in the Church of England. This is the great mainstay of the Puritan and Nonconformist attack upon the Church, that she was the abettor and the propagator of abuses. It is the consciousness of moral superiority in that which

appeared to them to be the most important of all moral duties, namely, unworldliness, that gave point to their denunciations. In the 'Shepherd's Calender,' the earliest of his greater works, published in 1579, Spenser strikes the note which is maintained throughout:—

Witness of  
Spenser

These faytours little regarden their charge,  
While they, letting their sheep run at large,  
Passen their time, which should be sparely spent,  
In lustihede and wanton merriment.  
Thilke same bene shepheardes for the Devil's stedde  
That playen when their flockes be unfedde.  
Well it is scene theyr sheep bene not their owne  
That letten them runne at random alone ;  
But they bene hyred for little pay  
Of other, that caren as little as they  
What fallen the flock so they have the fleece,  
And get all the gayne, paying but a peece.

The time was once, and may againe retorne,  
When shepheards had none inheritaunce,  
Ne of land, nor fee in sufferaunce,  
But what might arise out of the bare sheepe,  
Were it more or less which they did keepe ;  
Well ywis was it with shepheards thoe  
Nought having nought feared they to forgoe,  
For Pan himselfe was their inheritaunce,  
And little served them for their mayntenaunce.

But tract of time and long prosperitie,  
That nource of vice, this of insolencie,  
Lulled the shepheards in such securitie,  
That non content with loyal obeysaunce,  
Some gan to gape for greedy governaunce,

And match them selfe with mighty potentates,  
Lovers of Lordship and troublers of states,  
Tho gan shepheard swaines to looken aloft,  
And leave to live hard, and learn to ligge soft.

In the satire of 'Mother Hubbard's Tale' he puts into the mouth of the Priest a recommendation of the clerical life as one of little work and less responsibility.

To feed men's soules, quoth he, is not in man,  
For they must feed themselves, do what we can ;  
We are but charged to lay the meate before,  
Eate they that list, we need to doo no more.

Now once a week, upon the Sabbath day,  
It is enough to do our small devotion,  
And then to follow any merrie notion ;  
Nor are we tyde to fast but when we list,  
Ne to weave garments base of wollen twist ;  
But with the finest silks us to array,  
That before God we may appeare more gay.

How different is this from George Herbert's ideal !  
'The country parson is exceedingly exact in his life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his ways. And first, because country people live hardly, . . . the country parson is very circumspect in avoiding all covetousness, neither being greedy to get, nor niggardly to keep, nor troubled to lose any worldly wealth, but in all his words and actions slighting and disesteeming it even to a wondering that the world should o much value wealth, which, in the day of wrath, hath not one dram of comfort for us.'

The reality approximated, it is to be feared, more

often to Spenser's satire than to Herbert's picture. Underneath all the torrent of declamation poured by Eliot, by Pym, and by Milton, upon the Arminian clergy, amid all the abuse levelled at convictions with which they did not agree, and at opinions which they did not understand, is to be discerned a firm and settled belief that the Church system was inherently corrupt, and was maintained solely for its worldly advantages. Milton asserts this in so many words of Milton in his 'Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty,' published in 1641. 'They,' *i.e.* the Clergy, 'admire and dote upon worldly riches and honours, with an easy and intemperate life, to the bane of Christianity: yea, they and their seminaries shame not to profess to petition, and never leave pealing in our ears that unless we fat them like boars and cram them as they list with wealth, with deaneries and with pluralities, with baronies and stately preferments, all learning and religion will go under foot.' And again in the same year, in his 'Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnus:' 'This is the root of all our mischief. How can it be but ever unhappy to the Church of England while she shall think to entice men into the pure service of God by the same means that were used to tempt our Saviour to the service of the devil, by laying before Him honour and preferment? O State-grown piety! O gospel, rated as cheap as thy Master at thirty pence, and not worth the study unless thou canst buy those that will sell thee!' To the fully developed Puritanism of Milton in 1641, the very existence of endowments seemed opposed to the simplicity of the Gospel, and the Church system seemed hopelessly



corrupt because of its dependence upon endowments ; yet it is easy to see that it was the abuse, not the existence, of endowments that had led him to this decision. In 'Lycidas,' published in 1637, it was not the fold itself that was corrupt, but 'those that for their bellies' sake creep and intrude into the fold.' In that he was

at one with Eliot, when in 1629 he denounced of Eliot Laud, Neile, and Montague, in his place in Parliament, not because they were Bishops, but because they were, as he conceived, corrupt Bishops. 'I reverence the order,' he said, 'but I honour not the man.'

Puritanism, in fact, required a practical object at which to direct its forces if it was to win the victory.

Puritanism intellectually incompatible with the Church system It had taken its stand boldly within the portals of the Church of England, and claimed to have a right, if not the exclusive right, to be there. From an intellectual point of view it was a claim impossible to make good. Its theology was not the theology of the Prayer Book, and could with difficulty be made to square with the theology of the Thirty-nine Articles. Its historical position was the exact opposite to that claimed, rightly or wrongly, by the Church in her formularies and in Acts of Parliament. So cramped and uncomfortable did it feel within the limits of the Church, that it had already tried to organise for itself a separate form of discipline in the Genevan platform, and to impose a different standard of theology in the Lambeth Articles. By simply neglecting a large part of the Prayer Book it had succeeded in formulating for itself what was practically a separate form of worship.

Morally, on the other hand, Puritanism was in a

much better position. Its intense individualism appealed strongly to the deeper and more serious side of the English character. Its simplicity and its self-restraint were strengthened by the sense of a personal call and a personal mission; but it would have remained locked up in the hearts of a few, like other religious motives, had it not been for the powers of attraction and opposition called forth by the political crisis through which England was passing. When men, who loved right and hated wrong above all things, once learned to look upon the government of the king as false and dangerous, and the rule of Bishops as corrupt and worldly, they would not be restrained by any timorous scruples for the framework of the constitution from putting their convictions into practice at the risk of a revolution. The system which Whitgift had struggled to maintain, Calvinist though he was, because it was in his eyes bound up with the greatness of Elizabeth's rule, and was part of the constitution of the country; the system which Laud strenuously enforced, because in his eyes it was part of a great historic past, part of the constitution of the Catholic Church—that system Cromwell and Milton determined to overthrow, because in their eyes it was the symbol of a corrupt Clergy and of a tyrannical Government. Puritanism could only make good its claim to be admitted within the fold of the Church of England by breaking down the barriers raised to protect the sheep from the wolves.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE CHURCH UNDER JAMES I.

JAMES I. seems at first sight to have been born to disappoint the hopes of his friends. The Puritans, remembering how he had been trained in the school of orthodox Protestantism, looked forward to the realisation under him of the complete reformation which they had so long desired. At the Hampton Court Conference they found in him their most dangerous opponent, if not a judge who had already prejudged their case before hearing the arguments. The Roman Catholics, remembering the constancy of his mother, and knowing something of his negotiations with the Pope, hoped for a total repeal of the penal laws. They were treated to much learned theological controversy, were amused with many professions of good-will, and were offered a grudging and fitful toleration which was always subservient to the exigencies of politics. The Protestant powers of Europe, remembering how England had stood forward under the great Queen as the champion of liberty of thought and action against the world-wide tyranny of Spain, recognising gladly in James the father-in-law of the prince upon whom fell the full weight of Austro-Spanish displeasure, looked confidently to England in the great European crisis of the Thirty Years War for leadership and support. They were met with many diplomatic messages and the marriage treaty with Spain.

Political  
attitude of  
James I.

Nevertheless James was not quite the false friend, or the deceitful and pusillanimous ally that he seemed to be. No one understood better than he the difficulties of the problems with which he had to deal, no one had a clearer view as to the course which politics ought to take so that those difficulties might be surmounted; but no one had less power of inducing men to carry out his views. Gifted with considerable political insight, he was always making astounding political mistakes. His statecraft was ever at the mercy of his vanity and his cowardice, his shrewdness ever the victim of his affection. His personal failings were political blunders. Scotchman though he was, he was the slave of ideals. Ever dreaming of great political and religious combinations, in which, by the sheer power of kingcraft and of reason, he should be able to act as arbiter among nations and faiths, and restore peace to a troubled world, he refused to look facts fairly in the face, and realise that the business of a statesman is not to aim at the ideal, but to achieve the possible. Still we cannot refuse him the credit of understanding the real wants of England better than most Englishmen. He saw, what perhaps no one who had been bred up under the influence of the great death-struggle with Spain could possibly see, that the danger to English independence from the Counter-Reformation had passed away. The crisis was over. The storm had passed. The time had come to repair its ravages and restore peace to a divided nation. It seems almost ludicrous to compare James I. and Oliver Cromwell; yet there was this in common between them, that each, holding the reins of government when the crisis of a

His character

great religious struggle was passing away, found in a theory of limited toleration the best means of 'healing and settling' the wounds which the struggle had produced.

It was plain, in fact, to any eyes that were not blinded by religious or patriotic enthusiasm, that with the death of Philip II. the whole Roman Catholic problem had very much altered. There was no longer any danger of the overthrow of the national Government or the national Church by force. There was no longer any danger of treasonable plots among the English Roman Catholics to carry the bull of Pius V. into effect. Those plots had always been stirred up from abroad. They were always closely connected with designs of foreign aggression. With Henry IV., the vanquisher of the Guises on the throne of France, and the incapable Philip III. on that of Spain, the theatre of war had shifted from the coasts of the Channel to the mountains of Bohemia and the valley of the Danube. The bâton of command had been seized from the palsied grasp of Spain by the younger hands of Ferdinand of Styria and Maximilian of Bavaria. The storm which had passed from England was lowering and gathering over Germany.

The Popes recognised this fact clearly enough. Pius V. and Gregory XIII. had deposed Elizabeth, declared war upon her, stirred up opposition to her at home and abroad, and actually invaded her territories. Clement VIII. wrote a letter to James before Elizabeth's death, assuring him of his support, should any of the English Roman Catholics design to oppose his peaceful accession to the throne.

Changed  
condition of  
Europe in  
1603

Altered  
policy of the  
Popes

It is true that all danger of assassination had not passed away, for the persecution had raised up in the Roman Catholic ranks a body of desperate men, who were ready to go all lengths for what they believed to be the interests of their religion, and who showed but little obedience to their superiors when they counselled moderation. But directly such criminal ideas took practical shape in the plot of Watson and Copley in 1603, both the Archpriest Blackwell and Father Gerard the Jesuit took care to inform the Government. The enforcement of the penal laws could no longer, then, be defended on the ground that they were directed against a body of men who, whether they wished it or not, were pledged by their superiors to be traitors. The ordinary laws of treason were sufficient to deal with plots such as that of Watson. The assistance which the Roman Catholics had given to secure the peaceful accession of James, and to discover the treason of Watson, the friendly attitude of the Pope, the proved loyalty and attachment of the great house of Howard, all helped to show James that if he continued to enforce the penal laws it could no longer be on the ground that Roman Catholics were traitors. It was still open to him to adopt the position taken by the House of Commons, and to maintain either that the Roman Catholic religion should be extirpated or that religious uniformity was so necessary to the national welfare as to justify religious persecution. The latter argument might fairly be taken to excuse political repression and exclusion from offices of trust, and even suppression of public worship, such as the Protestant Nonconformists suffered, but it could hardly, even in the seventeenth

century, be extended to justify the infliction of a traitor's death upon those who merely celebrated the rites of a proscribed religion.

James had, when in Scotland, publicly announced that he was unwilling that the blood of any man should be shed for diversity in religion, and he repeated this solemnly to his first Parliament. Soon after his accession he gave Northumberland a promise that he would 'not persecute any that will be quiet, and give but an outward obedience to the law.' He also declared, with regard to the recusancy fines, 'that he would not make a merchandise of conscience.' At the same time nothing was further from his wishes than to see an increase in the number of Roman Catholics, or to hamper the supremacy of the Church, which he always looked upon as bound up with the supremacy of monarchy. He accordingly determined to remit the recusancy fines, and, though maintaining the penal laws in existence, only to enforce them against Priests. By this means he hoped in course of time to solve the Roman Catholic problem by a policy of gradual starvation, while he always held in his hands the power of providing for his own security if occasion arose.

Such a policy, conceived entirely in his own interests, pleased no one. To the Puritans it seemed a dangerous tampering with Antichrist, and a doubtful exercise of monarchical power. It did nothing to remove from the Roman Catholics the stigma of disloyalty under which they smarted. It did nothing to give them the assurance of even temporary peace. They were still left absolutely at the

Attempt of  
James to  
grant a  
limited tole-  
ration to the  
Roman  
Catholics

Its failure

mercy of the King, and must necessarily before long be again the victims of his political necessities or of his personal fears. And so it turned out. In July 1603 the recusancy fines were remitted. In February 1604 the increase of avowed Roman Catholics alarmed James, and a proclamation was issued for the banishment of all Priests. In May the King complained to the House of Commons of the increasing numbers of the Roman Catholics. In July he gave his assent to a Bill which confirmed all the severe statutes of Elizabeth's reign, although he did not intend to enforce it. In February 1605, annoyed at a report which ran like wildfire through Europe, that he was going to follow the example of Henry IV. and make his submission to the Pope, he enforced the recusancy fines. In January 1606 the terror of the Gunpowder Plot blew to the winds the last shreds of the policy of toleration, and new and more severe Acts against the recusants disgraced the statute-book, and dishonoured the Church, by imposing a sacramental test for the furtherance of the purposes of the criminal law.

By these statutes, as impolitic as they were un-Christian, every recusant was to receive 'the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper' at his parish church at least once a year, under the penalty of a fine of 60*l.* or the forfeiture of two-thirds of his lands.<sup>1</sup> But this was not all. A more stringent oath of allegiance was imposed upon those suspected of recusancy. No Roman Catholic was permitted to practise as a barrister, attorney, or physician. His house was subject at all times to the visits of the

Enactment  
of fresh  
recusancy  
laws

<sup>1</sup> 3 Jac. I. c. 4, 5.



magistrates in search for arms. He was forbidden to act as guardian or trustee. He was compelled to take an oath of allegiance so framed as to deny the Pope's deposing power, while acknowledging the King's right to the throne. He was treated by the law as an outcast from honourable society, unfit to be entrusted with responsibilities. The wonder is that treatment such as this did not create the evil it was intended to cure, and that Roman Catholics, ousted by the law from honourable employment, did not find themselves forced into treasonable practices. Meanwhile the Church, as if glorying in her shame, was so far from protesting against being used by the State as a detective, that she was actually engaged in proclaiming submission to the King as the basis of all true religion, as well as of all true government. The duty of non-resistance to constituted authority was first formulated as of a religious obligation in the canons which were passed by Convocation in 1606, but which, as they did not receive the royal assent, were never of binding authority.<sup>1</sup>

So ended James's honest but hopeless attempt to solve the Roman Catholic problem by a limited and hesitating toleration. It was premature, and was doomed to failure from the first. The wicked desperation of Catesby and his accomplices served to put an end to all efforts of the sort, not merely for the time, but for many years to come. From the date of the Gunpowder Plot, the policy of Church and State in England towards the Roman Catholics was that of the enforcement of con-

<sup>1</sup> These canons, together with a defence of them, were published in 1680 under the title of Bishop Overall's Convocation Book.

formity pure and simple by such a use of the recusancy laws as might at the time be found expedient. The Roman Catholic problem ceased to be important, not because this policy of the enforcement of conformity was successful, but because, with the passing away of the spirit of the Counter-Reformation and of the religious wars, Roman Catholicism ceased to be aggressive. The Stuart kings found the power of Roman Catholicism in England more useful than dangerous to their own government, and were willing to let the weapons of persecution rust. It was not until Roman Catholicism, allied with despotism, was threatening, not the safety of the Crown, but the liberties of the nation, that Englishmen were rudely forced to remember that the problem of religious division still remained unsolved, and blindly rushed in panic to refurbish under William III. the same weapons of religious persecution and civil repression which had proved so useless a century before under Elizabeth and James.

The Puritan difficulty did not solve itself so easily, for, as we have seen, it affected the majority of the Clergy and of the laity of England, and was connected closely with the growing spirit of liberty in Parliament. Directly Elizabeth was dead, Whitgift with many misgivings sent Nevill, Dean of Canterbury, to offer to James his congratulations on his accession, and to find out if the King was really so bent upon the establishment of Presbyterianism as he was reported to be. Nevill was soon able to relieve the Archbishop's mind by the assurance that James had no intention of altering the existing government of the Church. But it was James's special weakness to wish

Subsequent  
treatment of  
the question,  
1605-88

The Puritan  
difficulty

to put every one right in ecclesiastical matters, and he seems to have looked forward to being able to show to the English nation how much better a trained theologian like himself could deal with internal disunion than a politician like his predecessor, whose theological opinions were merely based upon personal preferences.

On his way from Scotland in 1603 he received, apparently without disfavour, a petition which, though unsigned, claimed to have received the support of more than a thousand of the Clergy. Its prayer was comprised under three main heads. First, for considerable alterations in the Prayer Book, especially for the excision of the words 'absolution' and 'priest,' for the omission of the use of the ring in the marriage service, and of the sign of the Cross in baptism, and for the discontinuance of the rite of Confirmation. Next, for the restriction of Ordination to those only who were able to preach, and for the enforcement of residence. The third was for the removal of abuses connected with the ecclesiastical courts, tithe impropriations, and pluralities.

Shortly after his arrival in London, Bacon addressed to him—not, we may be sure, without first discovering whether such an act would be displeasing—certain 'Considerations touching the Better Pacification and Edification of the Church of England,' in which he argued forcibly and dispassionately for the encouragement of preaching, and the attainment of unity, not through the enforcement of discipline by the High Commission Court, but through the teaching of the faith and the practice of virtue. In July 1603, James of his own accord announced that he was going to encourage the growth of a preaching ministry by setting

The Mille-  
nary Peti-  
tion

Bacon's  
'Considera-  
tions'

aside for the purpose some of the impropriate tithes belonging to the Crown, and recommended the Universities to do the same. In the autumn he issued a proclamation to the effect that he was prepared to correct all abuses in the Church, and in order to collect the necessary information upon the points in dispute he summoned a conference to discuss them in his presence in the following winter.

In answer to this summons the Hampton Court Conference met on January 14, 1604. On the side of the Church appeared nineteen Clergy, including Archbishop Whitgift, Bancroft, Bishop of London, and Andrewes, the Dean of Westminster. On the side of the Puritans appeared at the King's request only four representatives—Drs. Reynolds, Chaderton, Sparks, and Knewstubs; but there is no reason to believe that a better selection of representatives could have been made if the choice had been left to the whole Puritan body. The conference had been summoned by James to do the work of a modern Royal Commission, and inform the royal mind on doubtful points. During the first day of its session the King remembered his position and behaved with dignity. He refused Reynolds' request that the Church should be placed under the burden of the heterodox Calvinism of the Lambeth Articles, but acceded willingly enough to the demand that a new translation of the Bible should be made. On the second day, however, an unlucky suggestion on the part of Reynolds, that any disputes which might arise as to the due regulation of the Prophecyings, if they were revived, might be decided by the Presbyters in conjunction with the Bishop, excited all the fear of

the despot as well as the ire of the theologian. 'Presbyterianism,' he said, 'agreeth as well with monarchy as God and the devil. Let that government be once up, we shall all of us have work enough, both our hands full; but, Dr. Reynolds, until you find that I grow lazy, let that alone!' From that moment he forgot the arbiter in the advocate, and the reformer in the controversialist. The remaining questions of ceremonial and discipline were brought forward, not to be listened to, but to be disposed of. 'I shall make them conform themselves, or I will harry them out of the land,' said the angry King, as at the close of the conference he shuffled out of the room.

The result was unfortunate for the Church and for the nation. The Puritans, in their petition and by their attitude at the conference, had shown that what they wanted was, not that toleration should be granted to the scruples of the conscientious precisian, but that Puritanism should be accepted as the orthodox teaching of the Church. By claiming that the Lambeth Articles should be imposed and subscribed as the recognised dogmatic formulary of the Church, they were claiming in fact, not that Calvinistic Puritanism should be allowed a place within the Church system, but that it should be proclaimed to be itself the true system of the Church. By claiming that Confirmation should be discontinued as superfluous, and the use of the sign of the Cross as superstitious, they were claiming in fact that the Church should avowedly cut herself off from historical Christianity, and assert her willingness to identify herself with the cause of foreign Protestantism.

Real nature  
of the claim  
of the  
Puritans

This was felt to be the real question at issue by the bulk of the laity and a large part of the Clergy of the Church ; but to James and to Bancroft the matter presented itself in an aspect more political than religious. Convinced by Reynolds' speech that the real desire of the Puritans was to establish Presbyterianism, James attached himself the closer to the Church system as it was. It is true that he never entirely threw off the bonds of the doctrinal Calvinism in which he had been brought up, but in the institution of Episcopacy he saw the strongest bulwark of monarchy. Forgetful of his promises of reform, blind to the danger pointed out by Bacon, that a system of Church discipline based upon hierarchical authority instead of upon doctrinal unity was a house built without foundations, he sent the Puritans back to their homes browbeaten and silenced, but not convinced ; and created a suspicion of unfair treatment in a large class of his subjects, from among whom were to come in later Parliaments the leaders of the Puritan opposition.

To Whitgift and to Bancroft it was the maintenance of the supremacy of the Church that was at stake. When James was meditating reforms Whitgift was exceedingly pensive ; when he was defending the *ex officio* oath he seemed to the Archbishop to be speaking by the direct inspiration of God. Believing that uniformity was the necessary preliminary to unity, and that no uniformity was possible except by means of the strong hand of compulsion, the Bishops welcomed with excessive adulation a sovereign who looked upon them as the surest supports of his throne. They gave themselves over completely to the service of a govern-

James's  
treatment  
of it mainly  
political

Mistaken  
attitude of  
the Bishops

ment which neither robbed the Church of her property, nor used her chief ministers as policemen. It needed a prophet to tell that this close alliance thus instituted between Episcopacy and monarchy, between Episcopal discipline and arbitrary government, was the beginning of a rift between the Church and the people, which was in a few years to grow into a chasm large enough to engulf both monarchy and Episcopacy in a common ruin.

While the Government under James was thus lending its power to the maintenance of the Church system from political motives, the Church herself was strengthening her own position and sharpening her own weapons. The Convocation of Canterbury in its session of 1603 had agreed upon a book of Canons, which were intended to form a code of discipline more or less complete, and which, though not legally binding upon the laity, have always been considered as expressing the mind of the Church on disciplinary matters. Bancroft, to whom the compilation of the book was mainly due, and who had acted as president of the Convocation which passed it—owing to the vacancy of the primacy by the death of Whitgift—took care that no loophole should be left by which a man who disagreed with the discipline and organisation of the Church could honestly remain among the Clergy of the Church. Canon III. affirmed the Church of England to be a true and Apostolic Church. Canons IV. and V. condemned, under pain of excommunication, those who asserted that anything in the Prayer Book or Articles was superstitious. Canon VII. denounced as excommunicate any one who should affirm that the govern-

The Canons  
of 1604

ment and discipline of the Church of England under his Majesty by Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, Archdeacons, and other officers was Antichristian or contrary to the word of God. Canon XXXVI. provided that all Clergy to be ordained, licensed, or admitted to a benefice should take an oath stating that they willingly and *ex animo* subscribed to the Royal Supremacy, the Prayer Book, and the Articles.

Armed with these weapons, and urged on by James and the council, Bancroft, who had succeeded Whitgift as Archbishop of Canterbury in December 1604, proceeded to apply the test of the subscription to all beneficed Clergy, and to deprive those who refused to subscribe. It was doubtful whether the power of the High Commission Court, through which the deprivations were carried out, extended to the taking away of a man's freehold for the refusal of subscription enjoined merely by ecclesiastical authority. The judges to whom the question was referred decided in the affirmative, on the ground that the King had by virtue of the Royal Supremacy power to make laws for the Clergy and to punish the disobedient, and therefore necessarily had the right of delegating that power to commissioners. This decision was in principle destructive of all ecclesiastical liberty. It proceeded on a theory of the supremacy similar to that held by Henry VIII. and afterwards by James II. It was in direct opposition to the theory contained in the Canons about which the dispute had arisen. It was a foretaste of the ship-money decision in 1638. But Bancroft and the Church party were too much pleased with the success of their policy to inquire into the principles of the

Enforce-  
ment of the  
Canons upon  
the Clergy



decision. They proceeded immediately to impose the subscription test. The bulk of the Puritans accepted it after some hesitation. About 300 resigned their cures and sought a more congenial soil in Calvinistic Holland. The policy of the Archbishop and of the King seemed crowned with success. Purged from the dead weight of so many Clergy who, though nominally her servants, were in reality in active disagreement with the essentials of her constitution, the Church seemed more united, more solidly compact than she had been since the accession of Elizabeth. This is what Clarendon meant when he described Bancroft as 'that Metropolitan who understood the Church excellently, and had almost rescued it out of the hands of the Calvinian party, and very much subdued the unruly spirit of the Nonconformists.'

To any one who looked back upon the history of ecclesiastical affairs in England since Elizabeth came to the throne, amid all the tangle of events, this fact could not fail to impress itself upon his notice, that, in spite of the great spread of Calvinistic opinion opposed to the Church among the Clergy, the position of the Church as an organised society was far stronger under Bancroft than it had been under Parker. A glance at the nature of the opposition experienced by the Church will be sufficient to prove this. Under Parker the disuse of the cap and surplice was demanded by the Calvinistic party almost as a condition of communion; in the Millenary Petition it was merely asked that their use be not urged. Cartwright, Brown, and Martin Marprelate had denounced the government of the Church by Bishops to

Growth of  
Church prin-  
ciple under  
Whitgift  
and Ban-  
croft

be anti-Scriptural and in itself irreligious; at Hampton Court the controversy mainly turned upon the retention or abolition of some ceremonies, and all the Puritan Clergy except 300 were found willing to subscribe an oath that they believed the government of the Church by Bishops to be in accordance with the will of God. Such facts show how much stronger the position of the Church had become. It was undeniable that on the face of things Whitgift and Bancroft, supported as they were by Elizabeth and James, had made Nonconformity unpopular, for they had succeeded in identifying it with disloyalty in an age which was peculiarly, perhaps blindly, loyal. Even the Millenary Petitioners were careful to explain that they are 'not factious men affecting a popular parity in the Church, nor schismatics aiming at the dissolution of the state ecclesiastical.' The House of Commons of 1604 in their celebrated apology stated that in approaching matters of religion 'they came in no Puritan or Brownist spirit to introduce their parity or to work the subversion of the state ecclesiastical as it then stood.'

But to one who looked below the surface it was obvious that there was something wanting in this Weakness of the Church system edifice of uniformity. It was without foundation. It was a system, but nothing more—a system powerful in the political authority which supported it, and in the ecclesiastical tradition which environed it, but which had little relation to the souls for whom it existed. Whitgift had succeeded in vindicating the supremacy of the law, but to him and to the vast majority of the Clergy over whom he ruled, it was the law and nothing more, the supremacy of which he

was vindicating. Bancroft fought for his order as well as for the law. In enforcing conformity to an Episcopal system, he believed fully that he was advancing a Divinely ordered form of government. But more than this was wanted before the Church system could appear to men to be other than the ecclesiastical department of government, coming to them with the same sanction, but with no greater sanction, than the laws of civil obligation. It required the teaching of history, which would show that the Church of England was in truth a descendant of the primitive Apostolic society, would trace her oneness, throughout the ages which had elapsed, with the other parts of that Apostolic Church, and would claim by right of unbroken descent and unstained lineage her part in the Apostolic gifts. It required the evidence of a worship which, though chastened and simple, should yet by its reverence and in its self-repression show forth to men's eyes the realities of the grace of which it was the shrine. It required, above all things, a theology which should teach that the law which was expressed in Church discipline and Church organisation, was the law of God, and therefore the law of reason—a law which, in the system of the Church, and in that alone, extended by Divine appointment to man the benefits of that higher law by which God for man's sake became man.

Such was the intellectual basis of the religious movement so strangely known in English history as Arminianism.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE RISE OF ARMINIANISM.

AT the beginning of the seventeenth century an ebb was distinctly visible in the wave of Calvinism which had passed over England in the days of Elizabeth. Reaction against Calvinism A good many reasons combined to make a reaction probable. The generation had passed away to whom the logical system of Calvin had come as a new and perfect Gospel, alone adequate to cope with the logic and the system of Rome. A generation of men had come to the front, which had grown up under the influence of the hated ceremonies, and had been trained in an Episcopal Church, and yet had proved themselves capable of upholding the banner of Protestant liberty against Philip II. and the Counter-Reformation with at least as much success as their fathers.

Experience had shown that there were spots even in the sun of Calvinism, and men were no longer so much dazzled by the success of Presbyterianism in Scotland as to be blind to the fact that Presbyteries and General Assemblies were quite as intolerant as Bishops and the Court of High Commission. They had begun to realise that nothing would be gained to the cause of liberty by placing Cartwright in the chair of Whitgift. The influence of the Government, too, was great and in many cases conclusive, for it appealed to men's pockets as well as to their principles. It is

ill arguing with the master of thirty legions, and there was many an honest Englishman who, without any strong convictions on the subject of predestination or of the divine right of Episcopacy, was content to follow where authority pointed the way. There was many an honest clergyman who was perfectly willing to take his opinions from his superiors, when he found he had to choose between conformity and deprivation.

But there were deeper reasons than these. As time went on the system of the Church endeared itself to the heart of the nation. From the first the Prayer Book, containing as it did so much of the old familiar services of the mediæval Church, rearranged and rendered more intelligible to the people, had won its way quickly into their affections. The whole system of the Church was now associated with a period of unexampled glory and national prosperity. Since the death of Mary the nation had taken a new position in the world, and with the responsibilities of that position the Elizabethan Church was associated. The Calvinistic movement of Elizabeth's reign had mainly affected the Clergy, and the laity in the large towns. The country people still remained Catholic in sympathies. Insensibly men became aware of the incompatibility of the system of the Church with the doctrine of Calvin. The position of a man like Whitgift, who himself believed in the statements of the Lambeth Articles, and yet could imprison as schismatics those who refused to subscribe to the Prayer Book, was thoroughly illogical. In fact, directly controversy arose, and Churchmen had to defend their doctrine and discipline by argument against the Presbyterian or the

Popularity  
of the  
Church  
system

Independent, they could not help laying stress on the doctrines of the necessity of Episcopacy and the visibility of the Church. Accordingly, we find that Bancroft, unlike Whitgift, was a staunch believer in the divine right of Episcopacy, and that the canons directly asserted that the Church of England was a true and Apostolic Church. As soon as Churchmen had to defend their doctrine and discipline by argument against Roman Catholics as well as against Nonconformists, it was necessary to show that the Church of England, being a true and Apostolic Church, differed from the Church of Rome only so far as the latter had deviated from the doctrine of the Apostles, and that therefore she offered to her members all the privileges of the primitive Church, and taught her children the whole deposit of faith. Accordingly we find, as characteristic of the Laudian or Arminian movement, that the doctrine of sacramental grace was insisted upon, and the idea of worship revived. In fact, the more the Church came to realise her own position, the more she was forced to part company with Calvinism; but for some years it was not certain exactly what form the reaction against Calvinism would take.

In the year 1594 Hooker published the first four books of his '*Ecclesiastical Polity*.' In them were sounded the first notes of the coming struggle. Though Hooker's '*Ecclesiastical Polity*' in its origin merely the answer to a personal attack by the Presbyterian Travers, in it he seeks to lay down the basis upon which all Church government philosophically rests. That basis Hooker finds in the supremacy of law, explained by and founded on reason. The whole moral as well as the physical universe is governed

by law; and inasmuch as God has thus subjected His creatures to law, law is to them the expression of a Divine will. But it is the expression of a Divine will which acts, not in an arbitrary, capricious, or spasmodic manner, but after an orderly, regular, and, in a word, reasonable system.

Here is a distinct appeal to the principle of reasonable authority against the personal infallibility of the Calvinistic scheme, and the exaggerated authority of Scriptural texts. If the will of God is expressed in reasonable law, the supremacy of that will is to be assured by the supremacy of law; and the supremacy of law necessitates an ordered, continuous, and historical progression, in which the facts of one age become the precedents of the next. This, in the region of morals or theology, is an admission of the principle of authority as, after all, the chief determining factor of our actions and our belief; not, it is true, the authority of an *ex officio* infallibility of Popes or Councils, still less of the personal infallibility of individual theologians, but the authority of an orderly system, of a living historical society, such as the Church, capable of defending by reason the conclusions to which it comes—an authority not very dissimilar to that appealed to in the famous conclusion of St. Augustine, *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*. Just as Whitgift and Bancroft were engaged in enforcing conformity to the Church system as a matter of civil and ecclesiastical duty, Hooker was recommending that system to the intellect by proving it to be the witness of a continuous and historical body dominated and ruled by law—the legacy of an authority which, inasmuch as it was

His doctrine  
of reason-  
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thority

reasonable, was at once acceptable to man's intellect and consonant to the Divine will.

Bacon approached the subject from a different point of view. To his mind, more imbued with the philosophy he loved than with the law he professed, Bacon's plea for intellectual liberty search after truth under the leadership of reason could not fail to bring men securely and contentedly under the obedience of law. The way to produce conformity of action was first to produce conformity of thought. The way to produce conformity of thought was to encourage freedom of investigation, to relax the enforcement of coercive discipline, and above all to put before mankind the living witness of a high spiritual life. Men were to be won, not coerced into unity. It is easy to see that Bacon here is the politician, who is seeking for an excuse to put an end, if it were only for a time, to the strain occasioned by penal laws; and the theorist, who, himself devoted to the search after truth and the attainment of knowledge, forgets that mankind is even less willing to bow down before intellectual than before political authority. The Church at that time was not strong enough either in intellectual, political, or spiritual position to be able to permit the free exercise of thought of which he dreamed. Yet Bacon in this very suggestion gave his assistance to the growth of the movement. By insisting that the true security of the Church against the Roman Catholic, as well as against the Calvinist, lay rather in the impregnability of her intellectual position, and the irresistible attractiveness of her spiritual strength, than in the assertion of her political power, he taught her a lesson of which she was not slow to take advantage.



Lancelot Andrewes united in himself the ecclesiastical learning and the personal saintliness which Bacon was demanding, and to which Hooker had appealed. It had been found necessary to base the position of the Church of England, after the changes of the Reformation, upon something wider than the infallibility of Councils, upon something deeper than the negations of Protestant controversy, or the unphilosophical novelties of Lutheran or Calvinistic theology. Hooker had found this deeper and wider basis in the authority of a reasonable law. It was the work of Andrewes to enforce this argument by showing that the authority thus appealed to was in fact the authority which the Church of England in her Reformation had especially striven to follow, namely, the authority of primitive Christian antiquity—the authority of the Bible interpreted by the councils and fathers of the undivided Church—that is, by the collective reason of Christendom. Here was a distinct law—the law of Scripture interpreted by the Church; but a law not simply imposed from without, but which derived its efficacy through the operation of reason working in a permanent and Divinely guided society. Here, too, was the answer to the appeal of Bacon, for in the faith which did not fear to justify itself by the obedience of the thoughtful and the learned during many centuries of Christian teaching, and in the lives and characters of many thousands of Christian saints, was found the wider sympathy and the deeper knowledge which he craved.

Andrewes is the bridge which separates and which unites Hooker and Laud. In all three are to be found

the spirit of reverence and the spirit of humility, which are necessary for the appreciation of the mysterious and sacramental side of Christian teaching. In all three is conspicuous the desire to defend the system of the Church by proving it to be at once Scriptural, reasonable, and historical. All three, therefore, acknowledge the claims of authority; but to each authority comes in a somewhat different form. To Hooker, the writer, it is the authority of the law of a Divinely guided reason, through which is discerned the mind of God working in the mind of man. It is an intellectual conception, which, however useful in argument and powerful as an educational weapon, it is somewhat difficult for the ordinary mind to apply to the facts of everyday life.

To Laud, the statesman and the party leader, authority comes in the form of the law of the Society of which he is an officer—the *ex officio* authority of council, of doctor, of canon, of rubric: in them Christian wisdom, under the guidance of God, has reduced into the simplest statements what is right to be believed and followed in matters both of faith and of discipline. In them the mind of God is plainly and clearly expressed. The simple duty of the Christian is to obey, and of the Christian bishop to enforce obedience. Here is a conception of authority which at least had the merits of being perfectly logical and perfectly intelligible, but was not likely to pass unchallenged in an age of great diversity of religious and political belief.

Andrewes, the theologian, the saint, and the courtier, equally with Laud acknowledges the authority of the society to which he belongs; but to him that

authority appeals, not so much in the crystalline form of canon or of rubric, as in the historical form of the Society itself. Canon and rubric exist for the sake of the Church, not the Church for the sake of canon and rubric. The study of theology and the study of history had brought home to Andrewes more vividly than to any other leader of the English Church since the Reformation the conception of the greatness of the Catholic Church, branching out into all lands from the Apostolic College, developing freely in different ways, under different conditions, in different climates, contracting imperfections, and suffering in consequence from grievous division and tyranny; yet, in spite of all, maintaining a visible unity in doctrine and discipline in its identity with the doctrine and discipline of the Apostles; still the spouse of Christ, and the pillar and ground of the truth, although subjected to Papal tyranny or infidel domination. The greatness and the historical position of the Catholic Church demand the willing obedience of love, not the enforced compliance of compulsion. The wide sympathies of a mind, trained in all the breadth of patristic teaching, would attract men into the fold by the authority of a living power, rather than tie them down by the authority of a written law. Hooker appealed to the head, Andrewes to the heart, Laud to the conduct of Englishmen.

The Arminian movement, begun under the guidance of philosophy, took shape through the evidence of history, and was enforced upon men as a matter of law. It was not until it had attained to the later stage of growth that it met with serious opposition, but by that time it had done its chief work. The enforcement of

law under Laud, the opposition he met with, the death which he suffered, the persecution which ensued—all, it is true, served to deepen the impression which the revival had made, to enlist sympathy in its favour, and to make men realise its necessity ; but as a constructive system of theology, based upon the authority of antiquity, justified by the authority of history, and vindicated by the authority of reason, it reached its full development in Andrewes.

The strength of Arminianism, then, was found in its vivid realisation of the continuous life of the Church, in its fearless reliance upon history, and in its deep sympathy with man's moral nature. It was soon to show its weakness in the confusion which it brought about between spiritual and civil authority. From being an intellectual belief affecting conduct through voluntary conviction, it became a political system enforced by penalties. The change is intelligible, though none the less lamentable. Directly men ceased to look upon the Church as a religious club or a political organisation, and began to regard her as the one Divine society, endowed with spiritual gifts, the chosen channel of spiritual privileges, they began to value the privileges of which they were the inheritors, to be attracted by religious mystery, and to believe in sacramental grace. To minds trained by the holy enthusiasm and loving obedience of the school of Andrewes, the contrast between the orderly dignity of the worship enjoined by the Prayer Book, and the irreverent slovenliness customary among the Puritans, was inexpressibly sad. When the Altar was used as a convenient table for the transaction of secular business, when parishioners claimed the right of building pews

The strength  
and weak-  
ness of  
Arminian-  
ism

for themselves above it, when at the great Puritan foundation at Cambridge—Emmanuel College—the use of the surplice was wholly disregarded, and the celebrations of the Eucharist were made as much as possible to resemble an ordinary meal, and purposely divested of all signs of reverence ; it was not unnatural that those who believed in the sacraments, and loved the orderly ritual of the Church, turned to the authority of the Crown, as the only authority they knew of able to enforce obedience to the law.

The Crown on its side was willing enough to come to their aid. James, because he was convinced that the Its alliance with the Crown cause of Church authority and of monarchical authority was the same, Charles, because of his stern, almost prim love of order, and because of his personal attachment to the Church, were quite ready to treat all opposition as disloyalty to the Crown. The court of the Star Chamber, equally with that of the High Commission, included bishops among the judges, and was used to enforce Church discipline. Attacks upon Church administration in Parliament were treated as invasions of the royal prerogative. The government of the Church became thus identified by the Clergy, as well as by the Puritan opposition, with the misgovernment of the country. Every fresh invasion of popular liberty by the King was condoned, if not applauded by the Clergy, and made them more and more unpopular. Every fresh instance of Episcopal maladministration or clerical corruption increased the hatred with which the Government was regarded.

But this was not the worst part of the matter. Directly Arminianism became powerful at court it

attracted to itself the sycophant, the flatterer, and the self-seeker. Many a clergyman succeeded in atoning for his worldliness and his laziness by his professions of orthodoxy. Laud and his friends were too little careful about the reputation and character of those they promoted. Perhaps they could not help themselves. The crisis was acute, the time short, partisans were necessary to carry on the fight. But, whatever the cause, it is impossible not to notice the contrast between the Bishops of the Laudian movement in the maturity of its persecution, and those of the heyday of its power—not to compare Sheldon, and Sanderson, and Jeremy Taylor with Wren, and Montaigne, and Neile. There is too much truth in Milton's well-known complaint of the Arminian clergy:—

Such as for their bellies' sake  
 Creep and intrude and climb into the fold ;  
 Of other care they little reckoning make,  
 Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,  
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest :  
 Blind mouths that scarce themselves know how to tell  
 A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught the least  
 That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs.

By the middle of the reign of James I. two separate and incompatible principles of religion had established themselves within the bosom of the National Church—the Catholic and the Puritan. Within a year of the death of James, two principles equally separate and incompatible had shown themselves within the sphere of civil politics, namely, those of monarchical and popular government. There was one factor

The self-seeking of some of the Arminian clergy

Opposing principles in Church and State

common to all the problems which were raised by these different sets of ideas. By the conception which a man had of the nature and force of authority on matters of opinion, would his religious and political conduct alike be guided, unless he was the slave of prejudice. If he was prepared to acknowledge that the decisions of councils were binding upon his faith, and that the traditions of the past ages should guide his conduct; if he admitted that religious truth was the inheritance of the Divine Society into which he had been baptized, and that he was not free to seek it outside of that Society; it was likely that he would be content to acquiesce, as his fathers had done, in the traditions of the Tudor government, and seek the welfare of the people in the wisdom of the king. On the other hand, it was pretty certain that the Puritan, who in religious matters acknowledged no authority but that of his own conscience, would not willingly give in his adhesion to a Government which regarded the convictions of individuals as of little worth.

This intimate connexion between politics and religion is the essential characteristic of the history of England during the seventeenth century. It is impossible to understand the controversies of the day unless their double character is always borne in mind. And yet it is easy to see that it was this intimate connexion between politics and religion which prevented the free and orderly development of both. It would have been much easier for England to have effected the change from the supremacy of the King to the supremacy of Parliament, had not the Church party of the Long Parliament necessarily

Relations  
between  
politics and  
religion

become the Royalist party of the Civil War; had not the political intelligence of Pym been clouded by the suspicion that Charles and Laud were engaged in a conspiracy to restore England to the obedience of the Pope. It would have been much easier for the Church of England to have won back the nation to a loyal and reverent obedience to the Prayer Book, without losing the moral earnestness which was the glory of Puritanism, had not the Long Parliament abolished Episcopacy, and Puritanism become synonymous with rebellion.

For it was not likely that Puritanism, if left to its own unaided strength, could long maintain its position in the English Church. It was out of harmony with the formularies, the ritual, and the discipline to which every member of the Church was accustomed from his childhood. It had failed in its effort to establish, under cover of the formularies of the Church, a ritual and a discipline of its own, which should be a faithful expression of its belief. Its strength lay in its appeal to the conscience, in its uncompromising protest against worldliness. In most cases which arose the decision of the conscience was instinctively the right one. The line between right and wrong is usually plainly to be discerned, from whatever quarter of religious or moral belief it is approached. But if the inquiry was pushed a little further, and the question was asked upon what grounds the conscience had acted, the Puritan had either to take refuge behind the dogmatism of Calvin, or to lay claim to personal infallibility.

There was no power of cohesion in such a system. As long as Puritanism was in opposition it was kept

Weakness of  
the Puritan  
principle  
apart from  
politics



together by the strongest of all ties, that of a common hatred. It mattered not upon what grounds the decision was arrived at, as long as in the end it was that of uncompromising hostility to Laud and all his works. Directly Puritanism was victorious its fatal weakness began to show itself. In Scotland, in order to avoid the disruption which must necessarily follow on the unlimited exercise of personal infallibility, obedience to authority was insisted upon with a fervour worthy of Ignatius Loyola—only it was the authority of Calvin, and not of the Pope. Confessions of faith, covenants, and protestations bound the Presbyterians together, like a vice, in the bonds of a rigid and narrow sacerdotal system, as unyielding and as deadening as that of the Spanish Inquisition. In England the personal infallibility of the new model army triumphed over Calvinistic orthodoxy. The bands which bind religious societies together were loosed and thrown to the winds. Every man became a law to himself, and the more thoughtful and orderly of the nation, weary of a toleration which had resulted in licence, welcomed back the Church system of uniformity, which, although intolerant, was at any rate not anarchical.

The Catholic spirit, as it displayed itself within the sober lines of the Church formularies, appealed to a wider area of thought and was based upon a more enduring principle than the Puritan. It, too, claimed on its side the decision of the conscience, but it was the decision of a conscience guided and formed by sixteen centuries of Christian teaching and ecclesiastical obedience. It claimed as of right the help of St. Athanasius, and St. Augustine, and St. Thomas,

Strength of  
the Catholic  
principle  
apart from  
politics

while free to accept if it liked the assistance of Calvin. To the fierce dogmatism of Presbyterian orthodoxy it opposed the intellectual breadth and deeper knowledge of Hooker and of Andrewes. The stern, self-centred individualism of Cromwell was met by the gentle, orderly self-repression of Nicholas Ferrar; the scornful denunciations of Milton by the quiet, humble introspection of George Herbert. Not that the sterner side of human nature was wanting. It is the patient endurance of suffering that has in the eyes of posterity redeemed the irresolute insincerity of Charles. Manful obedience to the call of duty has dignified the unsympathetic roughness of Laud. Love of justice and keen hatred of abuses have done much to conceal the darker traits of the character of Strafford.

Claiming to represent the whole of human nature, and not merely one side, the Catholic spirit made its bid for pre-eminence in England. Strong in its traditions and in history as the inheritor of the past, it claimed in fact and in law to be the representative of the present, it looked forward beyond the present to command in the future. In this it was mistaken. The future of England, when the struggle was over, was to lie as much with its adversary as with itself. The future even of the English Church was not to be wholly its own. Not content with resting its strength on its own intellectual position, and fortifying it with its own deepened spiritual life, it sought for help from a system of government which belonged wholly to the past, and with which England was losing sympathy every day. It wasted and frittered away its spiritual power in the vain attempt to snatch the fatal gift of temporal

dominion. The mistake was a natural one, but that it was a mistake must have been evident before his death even to its author William Laud.

## CHAPTER VI.

### WILLIAM LAUD.

THE death of Bancroft in 1610 seemed to most men to leave the primacy of the English Church in the hands of Andrewes. His colleagues in the Episcopate recommended him, his own high character and intellectual gifts marked him out for the post, it was well known that James esteemed him highly. All England was astonished when it learned that the royal choice had passed over Andrewes, and had fallen upon George Abbot, Bishop of London, who had had no parochial experience whatever, and had only been on the Episcopal bench for a little over a year. It is difficult to fathom James's reasons for the appointment. Whether it is to be attributed to his love of flattery, or merely to a fit of royal petulance, or considered as a tribute to the memory of Dunbar, whose chaplain Abbot had been, it is impossible to say. Certain it is that the appointment was an unfortunate one; not so much because Abbot in doctrine was a Calvinist, and out of sympathy with the religious opinions now beginning to manifest themselves in the Church and so soon to be dominant at court, as because he was wholly deficient in the qualities necessary for a leader of men, just at a time when a leader was most wanted.

Austere, harsh, narrow-minded, and unsympathetic, he was without influence at court and unloved by the nation. His very virtues told against him.

Character of  
Abbot

The straightforward conscientiousness which made him resolutely refuse to allow himself to become a party to the wicked schemes of the adulteress Lady Essex, made him also the most relentless judge of the High Commission Court. The hatred of tyranny and of superstition which made him the colleague of Raleigh in urging a policy of war with Spain, prevented him from seeing anything in Arminianism except treachery to the Protestant cause. The sincere but narrow piety with which he is credited by friend and foe alike, made him readily burn Wightman and Legate for heresy at James's instance, in the spirit in which Samuel hewed Agag in pieces at Gilgal. Yet it would seem that even his Calvinism was not made of that stern stuff which a few years later was to characterise the Scotch Covenanters. Perhaps his academic training had taught him the limits of conscientious opposition. He was content during the later years of his life to drop into comparative seclusion, while Charles, Buckingham, and Laud ruled England. He even gave his imprimatur to a sermon by Bishop Goodman on the Eucharist, which contained doctrine which must have appeared to him to come little short of idolatry, although he refused to licence the printing of Sibthorpe's assize sermon on passive obedience.

The twenty years during which Abbot ruled over the Church of England were critical years in her history. It was during that time that the Puritan opposition to the Church became identified with the Parliamentary

opposition to the Crown, and that the Catholic revival in the Church became identified with prerogative government. It was this merging into one another of interests not necessarily identical which caused the Revolution. Abbot seemed by his position and opinions to be singularly fitted to play the part of mediator between the opposing factions, at a time when mediation was still possible. Attached to Parliamentary Puritanism by his religious convictions, and his steady advocacy of a Protestant policy abroad; attached to the court by his official position, and his deference to the personal authority of the Crown, he might, had he had the requisite sympathy and political insight, have successfully played the part of peace-maker between the King and the nation, which was afterwards so unsuccessfully attempted by the vain and shifty Williams. But such a part was far beyond his capacity, he never seems to have had the slightest appreciation of the gravity of the crisis through which England was passing. During his long primacy the only important action affecting the Church which can be directly ascribed to his counsel was the sending of English ambassadors to the Calvinistic Synod of Dort in 1619. During the last ten years of his life he was content to stand aside, and let the chief part in directing the affairs of the Church be assumed by a younger man, and his own bitter opponent.

The same year that saw Abbot Archbishop of Canterbury saw Laud President of St. John's College, Oxford. The two men had been rivals in the theological controversies of the university, just as they were afterwards to be rivals at the council-

His failure  
as an eccle-  
siastical  
statesman

Early train-  
ing of Laud

table of the king. Laud, who was sprung from a merchant family at Reading, had been admitted as a member of St. John's College in 1589, obtained a scholarship in the following year, and became a Fellow of the College in 1593. From the first he seems to have imbibed from his tutor, Dr. Buckeridge, afterwards President of the College, and Bishop of Rochester, a strong conviction of the justice of the claim of the Church of England to be part of the Catholic Church of Christ. That conviction, developed by the unpromising logic of Laud's mind, and deepened by a wide and intelligent study of the Fathers, necessarily drew him on to a position, which, although logically unassailable, was startling to men who had been brought up in unreasoning submission to the authority of Calvin, and had been taught to look on the Pope as Antichrist, and on Protestantism abroad as merely the continental form of their own religion. Laud saw that the same reasoning which proved the Church of England to be the Catholic Church in this country, proved the Church of Rome to be, although corrupt, yet a true Church in Italy. Further, since Bishops had always been a necessary part of Church organisation since the times of the Apostles, the non-episcopal bodies of Germany and of Switzerland had forfeited their claim to be considered as parts of the true Church.

In his public utterances before the University he maintained these two positions, and accordingly brought down upon his head the bitter hostility of the Calvinistic party led by Abbot, then the Master of University College. He was openly denounced in the University pulpit as a Papist, and, as

Attacks  
upon him in  
the Univer-  
sity

his biographer tells us, it was almost an heresy to be seen in his company and a misprision of heresy to give him a civil salutation in the street. Nevertheless, the younger members of the University, those who had been bred under the rule of Whitgift and of Bancroft, and had been trained under the influence of Hooker and of Andrewes, were on his side.

In 1603 he was elected Proctor. Two years later, he took his first step on the ladder of preferment by being appointed chaplain to Mountjoy, lately made Earl of Devonshire, and it was in that capacity that he allowed himself to read the marriage service over Devonshire and his paramour Lady Rich, who had lately been divorced from her husband. The breach of discipline he thus committed weighed heavily on his mind, and he did penance for it all the rest of his life by observing St. Stephen's Day, the anniversary of the ceremony, as a fast. In 1608 he became Chaplain to Neile, then Bishop of Rochester and a great favourite with the king. In 1611, after a patient investigation of the circumstances, he was declared by James to have been duly elected President of St. John's College, on the promotion of Buckeridge to the see of Rochester in the place of Neile, who had been promoted to Lincoln. From this time honours flowed fast upon him. In the autumn of 1611 he was appointed Chaplain to the King. In 1615 he received from Neile the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, and in 1616 he was made Dean of Gloucester. From that time until his imprisonment in 1640, he was the most influential man in the Church of England, and his personal history becomes that of the larger movement with which his name is associated.

That movement, as we have seen, had for its end the vindication of the Catholic character of the Church of England, and for its means the enforcement of the law as it stood. At Gloucester, Laud found plenty of opportunity for testing his powers as a disciplinarian. The bishop, Miles Smith, was an accomplished Hebrew scholar, but neither understood nor cared for the ceremonial of the Church or even the decencies of worship. The fabric was in decay, the furniture but slovenly appointed, and the Altar—differing in this from most other Cathedrals—stood in the middle of the Choir. ‘Scarce ever a Church in England,’ said James when he offered Laud the Deanery, ‘is so ill-governed and so much out of order.’ Laud did not need the spur. He hastened to Gloucester, summoned the Chapter, procured from them orders for the repair of the building and the removal of the Altar to the east end, and, not content with that, ordered the Cathedral officials to make ‘a humble reverence to Almighty God,’ in the direction of the Altar when they entered the Church. The Puritan susceptibilities of the city of Gloucester were at once aroused. Meetings of the citizens were held to denounce the insidious advance of Popery in their midst. The Bishop declared he would not enter the Cathedral as long as the Altar remained where it was. One of his chaplains, named White, wrote a letter, quickly circulated through the city, in which he urged the Prebendaries to revive in themselves the spirit of Elijah, and speak a word on God’s behalf against the prophets of Baal. Laud, unmoved by the storm he had raised, unable to see either the necessity or the expediency of conciliating

Laud’s conduct as Dean of Gloucester



opponents, merely wrote a letter to the Bishop, threatening him with the King's displeasure if the tumults were not quickly put down, and placed the whole matter in the hands of the High Commission.

Such conduct is characteristic of the man. Convinced that the object he was aiming at was for the good of the Church—as indeed it was,—unable to realise that any man well affected to the Church could think otherwise, he treated opposition, not as opinion to be convinced, but as rebellion to be crushed, and unhesitatingly summoned the royal power to his aid without a thought of the consequences. Just as James would never surmount a difficulty if he could circumvent it, Laud would never convince an opponent if he could suppress him. For a time, at any rate, this policy was successful at Gloucester. Laud was summoned by the King to attend him on his journey to Scotland in 1617; and on his return in the summer of that year, he heard that, owing to the prompt measures of the magistrates, order had been restored, and the services of the Cathedral were being performed according to the rubrics of the Prayer Book.

Four years elapsed before Laud received the reward of his success in being appointed to the Bishopric of His intimacy with Buckingham St. David's, but during that time his influence at Court was steadily increasing, especially with the King's new favourite, Buckingham. 'That unhappy vapour,' as he is quaintly described by the historian of the Long Parliament, 'exhaled from the earth to such a height as to cloud not only the setting but the rising sun,' was as yet fairly free from the poison of the Court. Like a spoilt child, vain, gallant, arrogant, and

undisciplined, he had a better side to his character, and it was that better side that he showed to Laud. His generous transparent nature was open to religious impressions, though his selfishness usually made them pass away almost as easily as they came. His quick inquiring mind made him anxious to know the truths of theology, while his indolence disinclined him from the trouble of studying them. In Laud—grave, prim, patient, and dogmatical—he found the teacher and the adviser whom in his better moments he felt himself impelled to seek.

In 1622 Laud, at the command of the King, undertook the management of a controversy in which Buckingham was closely interested. His mother, The conference with Fisher a worldly, self-seeking woman, had in her old age lent her ear to the arguments of a Jesuit bearing the name of Fisher, who urged her to seek for the safety she demanded in the bosom of the only Church which claimed infallibility. James, anxious to avoid the scandal of a conversion in the Villiers family, and perhaps doubtful about the steadfastness of Buckingham himself, commissioned Laud to conduct a disputation with Fisher in the presence of the King and the favourite. The result was in every way creditable to Laud. Taking his stand on the authority of Scripture, as interpreted by the tradition of the primitive Church, and witnessed to by the practice and belief of the Church in all ages, he did not hesitate to appeal also to reason for the justification to man of the faith which he accepts upon the combined authority of his conscience and of the Church.

Here the teaching of Hooker and Andrewes is unmistakable. In Laud's view, Scripture is the only

infallible guide of faith. He adopts and defends Hooker's own statement, that 'Scripture is the ground of our belief.' He lays it down in the strongest possible way that Scripture, being the word of God, contains in itself all things necessary to salvation. The confirmation of this proposition is found in many quarters; but two lines of argument in particular converge to bring conviction.

One is that of tradition, which points to the Church as the living continuous organisation in which Scriptural truth is enshrined. The belief of the Apostles, the writings of the Fathers, the decisions of Councils, all combine to make the inference of the infallibility of Scripture irresistible. 'Tradition and Scripture do mutually, yet do they not equally, confirm the authority either of other. For Scripture doth infallibly confirm the authority of Church tradition truly so called. But Tradition doth but morally and probably confirm the authority of Scripture.'<sup>1</sup>—'A beginner in the faith or a weakling or a doubter about it begins at tradition and proves Scripture by the Church. But a man strong and grown up in the Faith and understandingly conversant in the word of God proves the Church by the Scripture. And then, upon the matter we have a double Divine testimony altogether infallible to confirm unto us that Scripture is the word of God. The first is the tradition of the Church of the Apostles themselves, who delivered immediately to the world the word of Christ. The other the Scripture itself, but after it hath received this testimony. And into this we do and may safely resolve our faith.'

Laud's doctrine that Scripture is the ground of belief

Witnessed to by tradition

<sup>1</sup> *Laud against Fisher*, p. 53, fourth edition, 1686.

The second argument is that of conscience and reason, which both suggest and justify the decision which tradition formulates. 'As all sciences <sup>And justified by reason</sup> suppose some principles, without proving, so have they, *i.e.* the theologians, almost all some text, some authority upon which they rely in some measure, and it is reason they should. For though these sciences make not their texts infallible as Divinity doth, yet full consent and prudent examination and long continuance have won reputation to them and have settled reputation upon them very deservedly. And were those texts more void of truth than they are, yet it were fit and reasonable to uphold their credit, that novices and young beginners in a science which are not able to work strongly upon reason, nor reason upon them, may have authority to believe till they can learn to conclude from principles, and so to know. Is this also reasonable in other sciences, and shall it not be so in theology? to have a text, a scripture, a rule, which novices may be taught to believe that so they may after come to the knowledge of those things which out of this rich principle and treasure are deducible. I yet see not how right reason can deny these grounds, and if it cannot, then is a mere natural man maybe thus far convinced that the text of God is a very credible text.' <sup>1</sup>

It is reason, therefore, that suggests to an uninstructed mind the likelihood that there should be an inspired and Divine guide. It is tradition <sup>And proved by faith</sup> which points to Scripture as that guide. But neither reason nor tradition is powerful enough to make a man embrace that teaching and bend his will in sub-

<sup>1</sup> *Laud against Fisher*, p. 51.

mission to that guide. It is faith alone which can do this, which can minister the balm of certainty to a distracted soul. 'So then,' says Laud, in concluding the main part of his argument, 'the way lies thus. The credit of Scripture to be Divine resolves itself finally into that faith which we have concerning God himself and in the same order. For as that, so this, hath three main grounds to which all other are reducible. The first is the tradition of the Church, and this leads us to a reverent persuasion of it. The second is the light of nature—and this shows how necessary revealed learning is, and that no other way can it be had. The third is the light of the text itself, in conversing wherewith we meet with the spirit of God inwardly inclining our hearts and sealing the full assurance of the sufficiency of all three into us. And then and not before we are certain that the Scripture is the word of God both by divine and by infallible proof. But our certainty is by faith, and so voluntary, and not by knowledge of such principles as in the light of nature can enforce assent whether we will or no.'<sup>1</sup>

It was not perhaps of much avail to point Lady Buckingham to a certainty alone obtainable through  
Value of  
Laud's  
position
 faith working by reason, when she required a religion which promised her safety at the cost of the least possible intellectual and spiritual effort. All the arguments of Laud were thrown away upon her; but it was at least something that a teacher should have arisen in the days of the narrow dogmatism of the exponents of Papal authority, and of the narrower assumptions of Calvinistic infallibility, who, speaking

<sup>1</sup> *Laud against Fisher*, p. 74.

in the name and by the commission of the Church of England, should have put forward on her behalf a scheme of religion, which, while enjoying by the right of inheritance the transmitted traditions of the Apostolic Church, did not hesitate to justify them by the arguments of Reason. It is true that the religious position taken up by Laud was too intellectual in character to impress itself deeply upon the nation or stir deeply the springs of human nature. Nevertheless it was all important for the Church, forced as she was daily into controversy on account of her middle position between Rome and Geneva, that she should, just at the time when she was beginning to shake off the trammels of the Calvinism which had for a few years oppressed her, be able to assume a controversial position on the great question of the day morally and intellectually defensible.

The Laudian movement was less successful in the domain of action than it was in the domain of thought. It was always stronger among the Clergy than among the laity, among the thoughtful than among the thoughtless. The noise which it made in the world was made more by the reverence of its worship and its teaching of Sacramental grace, than by its conception of the origin and nature of Church authority; yet by the fact that it had moved out of the barren region of mere rival assertions of the infallibility of either Scripture or tradition, and had attempted to harmonise both by the action of reason inspired by faith, it had widened the intellectual vision of mankind and reached a landmark in the progress of thought.

To one of his hearers, at any rate, the arguments of

Laud had appeared convincing, and his earnestness attractive. Buckingham not only gave up all idea, if he ever had any, of joining the Church of Rome, but entered into the closest of all relations to Laud. In the summer of 1622 he chose Laud as his spiritual adviser, and having made his confession to him, received the Holy Communion on Whitsunday. It is evident from the simple earnestness of the prayers for Buckingham, set out by Laud in his diary, how near to his heart was the welfare of his powerful penitent; but there is no reason to think that Laud was ever guilty of degrading the confessional by attempting to use its influence in the sphere of politics. At the same time the firm friendship thus established with one whose ascendancy over the Prince of Wales was so assured, was certain very largely to increase Laud's reputation at Court. As Buckingham advanced in the favour of his master, and absorbed one after another in quick succession all the chief offices of the government, Laud could not fail to find the details of the ecclesiastical business of the country falling daily more and more into his hands.

As Laud looked out upon the condition of the Church of England, he found two special dangers threatening her very existence. One arose from the decay into which Church discipline had fallen both over clergy and laity, the other from the determined efforts still being made by the Puritan party in the Church to establish their own services and obtain the teaching they desired under cover of the Church organisation. Laud was a man who believed implicitly in a system, who sought

Growth of  
Laud's influ-  
ence at  
court

Nature of  
the dangers  
affecting the  
Church

to influence men by the encouraging the formation of habit far more than by the inculcation of dogma. To him the secret of ecclesiastical power lay in the organisation of the Society far-reaching and wide-embracing; not in the irresistible conviction brought to the individual soul by a few dearly cherished truths. He realised more than any one of his time, that the only way in which the Church could hope to resume her dominion over the hearts of Englishmen was by forming in them the habits of obedience, by training them in habits of reverence, by reviving in them the habits of worship. Uniformity was not merely an end to be aimed at in order to avoid political difficulties, it was the means to be pursued in order to make men good Christians. The law of the Church was in truth to be the schoolmaster to bring England to Christ. By teaching men the comeliness of ecclesiastical order, by attracting them with the solemnity of ecclesiastical ceremony, above all by impressing them with the reverence due to the worship of God, he would lead them to prefer the broad, philosophical theology of the Fathers, to the crude and narrow conceptions of the dominant Calvinism.

It was inevitable, therefore, that Laud should appear at the bar of history as essentially a disciplinarian; but he was a disciplinarian, not because his nature was that merely of a martinet, but because discipline was at the time the most necessary and the most effective weapon to use. It is a mistaken view of Laud's character that would stamp him as consciously the leader of a party, much less the apostle of a

Character of  
Laud's  
efforts to  
meet them

The real  
nature of his  
enforcement  
of discipline



religion winning converts by the sword. In his own eyes he appears but the enforcer of a system, a system prescribed to them by the Church, which he is not at liberty to disregard or to alter. Being placed in the position of an officer of the Church, he has no option but to enforce her commands upon all; and in the obedience which he exacts, the people will find their true happiness, did they but know it.

And through all the actions of his public life runs a strange vein of pathos. Long ago he has given up all effort, perhaps even all desire for popularity. His high conception of duty He knows, whatever he does, that he will be the victim of misrepresentation and calumny. He does not shrink from it, he does not even use the ordinary artifices of society to conciliate opposition. 'He did court persons too little,' says Clarendon, 'nor cared to make his designs and purposes appear as candid as they were.' He seems to have a presage of coming failure, a conviction that his enemies were too strong for him. 'Truly, my lord,' he writes to Wentworth in 1633, 'I look for neither many nor happy days; not for many, for I am in years; nor for happy, because I have no hope to do the good I desire—I have had a heaviness hang upon me ever since I was nominated to this place (*i.e.* the Archbishopric of Canterbury), and I can give myself no account of it unless it proceed from an apprehension that there is more expected from me than the craziness of these times will give me leave to do.' And yet, the man outwardly so stubborn in pursuing his will, so unyielding in his sense of duty, seemingly to his enemies 'of a disposition too fierce and cruel for his coat,' was inwardly as sensitive as a woman. He

is at pains to justify himself in the Star Chamber even to so virulent an opponent as Burton. At his trial he writhes visibly under the envenomed shafts of so practised a debater as Say. His diary is full of entries showing how he shrank from the gaze and the comments of the populace. He turns continually to the Psalms for comfort when the wicked are oppressing him. His prayer is the outpouring of a mind that can hardly bear the intensity of the struggle.

Nevertheless, through all this mental despondency, with the sense of probable failure ever present to him, Laud went boldly on with unfaltering steps in the simple strength of conviction, at the simple dictates of duty, bringing the light of Church discipline to bear upon every nook and cranny of English ecclesiastical life. He was no respecter of persons. 'We must not,' said he, when ordering the prosecution of Prynne in the High Commission Court, 'sit here to punish poor snakes and let him go free.' Indeed, 'the poor snakes' were more likely to fare well at his hands than those who ought to know better. 'He intended the discipline of the Church,' as Clarendon says, 'should be felt as well as spoken of, and that it should be applied to the greatest and most splendid transgressors as well as to the punishment of smaller offences and meaner offenders.'

His first duty was to put a check on the flood of Calvinistic teaching, which was being poured forth from the Anglican pulpits every week, chiefly by the afternoon lecturers, and to substitute for it the simple doctrine of the Church as found in the Catechism. In 1622, James, on the

The policy  
of Laud

The silenc-  
ing of the  
Calvinistic  
preachers

advice of Laud, issued injunctions to the Clergy, through the Bishops, forbidding any preacher under the degree of a Bishop or a Dean at the least, to presume to preach the deep points of Predestination, Election, Reprobation, or the universality, efficacy, resistibility or irresistibility of God's grace, and urging them to catechise the children in the afternoons; while the Bishops were much blamed for their carelessness in licensing preachers without taking adequate security for their orthodoxy. As these 'deep points' formed the staple of nearly every Puritan sermon, and the licensed preachers, who were in the habit of dealing with them, were Puritans to a man, it was impossible to mistake the object with which these injunctions were issued. The ferment caused by them was considerable. James, taunted with the wish to abolish sermons, was obliged to defend himself in an apology. Nevertheless, in spite of the opposition, Laud persevered. He believed from the bottom of his heart that this continual insistence upon a few doctrines, themselves of modern growth and of doubtful orthodoxy, diverted the energies of the Clergy from more important matters, destroyed the proportion of faith, and made men controversial partisans instead of humble and loyal Churchmen. Besides it would be little short of a betrayal of the truth were he to falter in his enforcement of his principles in deference to the prejudices of even the majority of the nation.

During the rest of his reign James was too much occupied with the schemes for the Spanish marriage, and was too much at the mercy of

Effect of the  
accession of  
Charles I.

Laud's witty and worldly-minded rival the Lord Keeper Williams, to pay much attention to eccle-

siastical affairs. The accession of Charles in 1625 brought a change. Williams at once lost his influence at court, and soon afterwards retired disgraced to his diocese of Lincoln. The whole administration of the country fell into the hands of the Duke of Buckingham, the patron and the pupil of Laud. Charles himself, austere, devout, irresolute, and learned, conceived a great affection for the staunch and clear-sighted divine.

Laud's influence became paramount. In 1625 he was appointed clerk of the King's closet; in 1626 he was translated to the see of Bath and Wells. It was he that was called upon to regulate the royal patronage by providing the King with a list of clergy marked for promotion or neglect, by the letters O and P (Orthodox and Puritan) placed after their names. To his hands was committed the duty of arranging the ceremonial of the coronation—a duty so well performed, that he notes in his diary with pardonable pride, that some of the nobility on their return said to the King, 'that they never had seen any solemnity, although much less, performed with so little noise and so great order.' His mind suggested the royal proclamation for the peace of the Church, issued in June 1626, in which the King forbade the discussion by writing or preaching of any opinions not warranted by the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. It was his hand that traced the Royal Declaration prefixed to the Articles in 1628, in which the King sought to put an end to the discussion of ecclesiastical questions in Parliament, by ordering that the Articles should be accepted in their literal and grammatical sense, reserving the settlement of any

Laud's  
policy of  
promoting  
his friends  
and silenc-  
ing his  
opponents  
by court  
influence

dispute which might arise, to the decision of himself and the Convocations.

It is possible that in a time of contentment and lethargy, a policy such as this might have succeeded.

Its fatal results The quiet removal of topics of controversy from the pulpits and the press, the steady discouragement of opinions disliked at court, might gradually have weaned the younger generation from sympathy with the Calvinism which hitherto had been more of a political watchword than a deep religious principle. But to do this effectually it was necessary that loyalty to the Church which was to take the place of Calvinistic infallibility as the guiding principle of the national religion, should in its turn be associated with what was deepest and strongest in English political thought.

Unfortunately for Laud, the exact opposite was the case. The demands for greater political freedom in the nation, for greater administrative control in Parliament, were the natural and inevitable outcome of greater political capacity. They were to be the leading principles of national development in the future. In union with them alone, could any statesman hope to effect a reformation in politics or religion. The immediate fate of the Laudian reformation was sealed when Laud deliberately associated himself with the government of Buckingham, and deliberately appealed to the royal power to assist his friends and to crush his enemies. At the accession of Charles a wiser and a bolder policy was still possible. In Eliot, in Coke, and, as yet, in Pym, there was no more of the Puritan than a somewhat blind and unreasoning dread of Rome, and a somewhat narrow and obstinate patriotism. In some of the

leaders of the Parliament, notably in Wentworth, there was a strong and intelligent love of ecclesiastical order. The word Puritan was still a term of reproach and ridicule; it needed but three years of Buckingham's government and of Laud's statesmanship to make it the watchword of civil and religious liberty.

At the first occasion of the meeting of Parliament in June 1625, Laud had seized on the opportunity of proclaiming the identity of Church principle with prerogative government. In his sermon, preached before the King at Whitehall the day after Parliament met, he asserted the dependence of Parliament upon the King, and the sacred character of the kingly office. 'The King is God's immediate lieutenant upon earth, and therefore one and the same action is God's by ordinance and the King's by execution, and the power which resides in the King is not any assuming to himself, nor any gift from the people, but God's power as well in as over him.' With these words ringing in their ears, Parliament was called upon to deal with an offender whose case brought the rival opinions of King and Parliament to a sharp antagonism.

Richard Montague, Fellow of Eton and Rector of Stamford Rivers, had in the preceding year been the subject of a complaint made to the House of Commons, that in a book which he had published, called a 'New Gag for an old Goose,' he had maintained Roman Catholic doctrines to be the doctrines of the Church of England. The book in question was written by Montague in the course of a controversy which he was carrying on with a Roman Catholic. In it he boldly discarded the usual Protestant

Laud's support of the royal prerogative

Montague's controversy with the Commons

arguments against Popery, freely admitted that the Church of Rome was a true Church, although corrupt, and claimed for the Church of England a position equally Catholic but less superstitious. This mode of defence, however satisfactory to theologians and students of Church history, was not likely to meet with much favour at the hands of a Puritan House of Commons. Abbot was asked to interfere. Montague appealed to James, and the King, delighted at the opportunity of displaying his theological learning and critical faculties, saw directly what the Commons could never see, that, true or untrue, Montague's position as a matter of fact was not only thoroughly in accord with the formularies of the Church of England, but afforded to its defenders the strongest possible ground from which to overthrow the arguments of Rome. To deny the visibility of the Church was to turn round on sixteen centuries of Christian thought. To accept it, and denounce the Church of Rome, not for apostacy, but for corruption, was to take the most trusty weapon from her armoury and to attack her in her most vulnerable point. James was too practised a controversialist not to see this. He extended to Montague his patronage, and accepted the dedication of his second book entitled 'Appello Cæsarem.'

When Parliament met in the summer of 1625 the Commons found their foe in high favour at Court. To pursue their quarrel with him was to enter upon a struggle with the Government and the King. They did not hesitate. He was at once questioned both for his opinions and for an alleged breach of privilege in publishing his second book before

Personal  
interference  
of Charles  
on his  
behalf

the Commons had finished their inquiry into the first, and was committed to custody. Charles immediately appointed him his Chaplain, and required the Commons to put a stop to proceedings against one of his own servants. The House naturally paid but little regard to a doctrine which would so easily serve, if once admitted, to shield every criminal in high position.

While the King was thus engaged in turning Montague's conduct into a personal question between himself and the Parliament, Laud was in his turn anxious to assure the King of the support of the Church in his ill-advised course. In August 1625, in conjunction with Buckeridge and Howson, he wrote a letter to Buckingham, logical enough, but singularly wanting in tact, urging him to use his influence with the King in favour of Montague, on the grounds partly of his character and attainments, and partly of the right of the Clergy to be judged in any matter of doctrine by the King and the Convocations and not by Parliament. The very mention of such a claim was sufficient to exasperate an assembly peculiarly tenacious of its privileges, and which was at the time claiming a right of free inquiry into all branches of Government. But not content with this, a few months later Laud and Andrewes, with two other Bishops, recommended Charles to forbid further controversy on the points in dispute, since he and his brother Bishops had examined the books and found nothing in them opposed to the doctrine of the Church of England. Was it likely that the Commons would forego their dearly cherished right of inquiry in deference to the decision of a few Bishops in what was practically their

Laud's claim  
of independence  
from  
Parliamentary  
control



own cause? Thus the breach between the Parliament on the one hand and the King and the Bishops on the other grew and widened through the folly of the Court, until the dissolution of 1626 came to put an end to the strife itself while intensifying the causes which produced it.

The case of Montague had shown pretty clearly how ready the Laudian clergy were to magnify the royal office in return for royal patronage. For the first time since the Reformation the Church of England found that she had to deal with a king who honestly desired to further her best interests, and, conscious of her own weakness, she threw herself unthinkingly into the royal arms. It is astonishing how Clergy who remembered the days of Elizabeth could have permitted themselves to magnify the royal power so indiscriminately, and to engage in conflict with the popular leaders so lightheartedly; yet it was so. 'Defend me with the sword and I will defend thee with the pen,' were the last words of Montague's appeal to Caesar. Robert Sibthorpe, in a sermon addressed to the judges at Northampton, inculcated the duty of passive obedience to the commands of the King, even when contrary to the laws of God. Roger Mainwaring, preaching before the King, enforced the duty of obedience as the ordinance of God, and distinctly limited the function of Parliament to that of merely assisting the king in carrying on the government of the nation. The sermon was printed at the order of Charles himself, in spite of the remonstrances of Laud. What wonder was it, that when the Commons met again in 1628, smarting under the sense of national dishonour

Growth of  
the doctrine  
of passive  
obedience  
among the  
Clergy.

brought about by the inglorious expeditions to Cadiz and to Rochelle, pained at the betrayal of Protestant interests in Germany, and angered at the fiscal exactions of 1627, they should indignantly ask themselves if that was the sort of government to which they were required to render a blind and slavish obedience under pain of damnation? The Petition of Right was at once the answer to Mainwaring and the prelude to his impeachment.

However earnestly the Commons might try to conceal the truth from themselves, it was impossible that the fiction could long be maintained that it was with Buckingham and Laud and not with Charles himself that the Parliament had to deal. Scarcely was the ink dry on the parchment of the Remonstrance against the Arminians, presented to the King in June 1628, in which Laud and Neile were openly named as the troublers of the English Israel, when it was announced that Neile was promoted to the see of Winchester; Montaigne, the licenser of Mainwaring's sermon, to the Archbishopric of York; and to Laud, the most obnoxious of the three, was given the superintendence of the important Puritan diocese of London. In the same year Montague was made Bishop of Chichester, and Mainwaring was rewarded by the gift of his vacated benefice.

Such appointments were little less than a declaration of war against the Parliament. Their claim to make themselves into a national court of inquiry in ecclesiastical matters was answered by a distinct refusal to accept, not merely of their control, but even of their counsel. Those that had been most prominent in

Charles re-  
wards the  
Clergy most  
obnoxious  
to the  
Commons

attacking the constitutional doctrines so dear to the Commons were apparently for that reason alone singled out for promotion, while the King's Declaration silenced all criticism on the doctrines they advanced. Eliot, high-minded and impetuous, eagerly caught up the gage of battle thus thrown down by the King. 'Are there Arminians?' he cried, 'look to those; see to what a degree they creep. Let us observe their books and their sermons. Let us strike at them and make our charge at them and vindicate our truth that seems obscure, and if any justify themselves in their new opinions, let us deal with them, and these testimonies will be needful.' A month later the House, in the celebrated Remonstrance, which was passed while the Speaker was being held down in his chair, set its seal to Eliot's challenge. 'Whosoever,' it said, in a formula which recalls the anathemas of an ecclesiastical council, 'shall bring in innovations in religion, or by favour seek to extend or introduce Popery or Arminianism, or other opinions disagreeing from the true and orthodox Church, shall be reputed a capital enemy to this kingdom and the Commonwealth.'

The die was now cast. The two parties were ranged against each other in opposite camps. The words of battle were given. On the one side was Charles resting on the strength of his prerogative and trusting in the divinity which doth hedge a king, supported by the Church. On the other side was the House of Commons resting on the power of the law, trusting in the awakening spirit of liberty, supported by Puritanism. Neither side asked for toleration. Both would carry

Distinct  
breach in ec-  
clesiastical  
matters  
between  
Charles  
and the  
Commons

out their own views by force. What was to Charles and to Laud the 'settled continuance of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England now established' was to Eliot and the Commons 'an innovation in religion designed to extend and introduce Popery.' The breach was complete, far too deep to be healed over by the palliatives of a Williams or the philosophy of a Falkland. Its origin lay deep down among the springs of the political and religious thought of the nation, and as long as the nation existed its presence would be felt.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ENFORCEMENT OF DISCIPLINE.

It was not likely that Charles or Laud would be able to see in the Puritan opposition anything but the spirit of faction, any more than Eliot or Pym could see in Laud anything but the spirit of Popery. To quail before a handful of men who were obviously as ignorant and prejudiced in religious matters, as they were confident and domineering, would be a grave dereliction of duty. It would be nothing less than the abdication of the post of teacher, and a slur upon the pastoral office. The diocese of London had, ever since the first days of the Reformation, been the nest of Nonconformity, and had lately become the stronghold of Puritanism. The call, therefore, was all the more paramount upon Laud to show

Determina-  
tion of Laud  
to persevere  
in the en-  
forcement  
of discipline

in that great diocese what the power of the Church might really be, if her whole counsel was followed and obeyed. To school men in habits of reverence, to train them in habits of obedience, to encourage them in habits of devotion, was the ideal of the duty of a Christian Bishop ever present to his mind. Disciplined by outward conformity to the rules of the Church, men would be the more ready to receive the mysteries of her inner teaching. It was his part to enforce that discipline; the rest he must leave to God.

An event which occurred in 1627 showed how fierce was the prejudice which any attempt to revive and utilise in England the ecclesiastical treasures of the past was certain to arouse. Charles, finding that the ladies of his court were in the habit of using books of devotion drawn from Roman Catholic sources, because of the want of any satisfactory manuals of prayers of English authorship, commissioned Cosin to draw up a book of devotion which should be suitable for the private use of English Churchmen. John Cosin was one of the most learned of the men of the day in liturgical and ritual subjects; and with Neile, Montague and Laud, used to attend the meetings of a committee, which met from time to time at Durham House, to consider the ecclesiastical difficulties of the country. He was, therefore, well known as a prominent member of Laud's party. The book of devotions which he drew up illustrates very aptly the theological principles of the Laudian revival, and the spiritual weapons by which it sought to combat sin and error. For a model, Cosin chose the orderly system in which the Church had for

so many ages delighted to enshrine its teaching, carefully pruned of all which was distinctly mediæval addition. The soul which guided itself by his direction was taught to join in the old canonical Day Hours of the Church, to say the seven penitential Psalms, to guard against the seven deadly sins, to practise the corporal works of mercy, to prepare itself by careful self-examination, and, if desirable, by private confession, for receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion.

In all this there was nothing that could with any appearance of truth be called Popish; but there was much which Puritanism instinctively felt to be opposed to its whole conception of the nature of religion. Union with God was to be won, not by an election once made and for ever assured, but by the lifelong struggle of the obedient soul, strengthened and armed by all the grace-giving powers of the Church. Sacraments environed it from childhood to the grave, and through the power of Sacraments it nerved itself for the fight. It lived in the presence, not of its Taskmaster, but of its Redeemer; was united with Him in the sacramental life, drew from Him in that life, day by day, through each prayer, in each act of self-surrender, by each Communion, rich stores of strength for the spiritual combat it had daily to wage. And so the spiritual doctor, in prescribing for the wounds which the combat was certain to bring, sought to strengthen the patient's constitution by every help which science could suggest. Each danger was carefully tabulated, the way to meet it carefully prescribed, the experience of the past confidently appealed to. The daily

Its sacra-  
mental  
teaching

round of orderly service; the scientific classification of sins, and virtues, and good works; the insistence on the Holy Eucharist as the central point of Christian devotion, all tended to train the soul to value the heritage of the past, and to acquire those habits of order, of reverence, and of awe, which were a necessary preliminary to a full appreciation of Catholic truth.

But to the Puritan the reasonableness, as well as the beauty, of such a system was incomprehensible. It seemed to him to be merely an attempt to copy the superstitions of Rome. It was enough for him that its spirit was drawn from authorities earlier than Luther. To his mind St. Augustine or St. Ambrose were as much Papists as Thomas Aquinas or Duns Scotus. William Prynne and Richard Burton at once attacked the book on its appearance, with a scurrility in which strength of language did duty for strength of argument, and the Commons' Committee of religion was instructed to inquire into the case. Had it not been for the dissolution of 1629, Cosin would have suffered the same penalty for differing from the Commons in religion, as Mainwaring had for differing from them in politics.

If men were so sensitive about the forms in which books of devotion, which nobody need buy, were cast, and the words they contained, how much more sensitive would they be when the ordinary services to which they had been accustomed were interfered with, and the arrangements of the Churches altered which they were obliged by law to attend. Yet if the Laudian Reformation was to be anything more

It is attacked by the Commons, 1628

The beginning of the ceremonial struggle

than an intellectual and academical movement, if it was ever to emerge from the domain of thought and be translated into practical action, the danger must be run. It was not enough that Fisher should be overcome by weapons taken from the armoury of the primitive Church, or that Goodman's inculcation of high Sacramental doctrine should be pronounced even by Abbot consistent with the formularies of the Church of England. Churches must be made fit for the worship of God, if men were to learn to worship God in them. The canons and rubrics of the Church of England must be obeyed by those who were her sworn ministers. Doctrine alien to the teaching of the Church must no longer be permitted to poison the minds of Englishmen under the shelter of a laxly administered discipline.

Sure of the support of Charles and the Council, trusting in the omnipotence of the Royal Supremacy exercised through the Court of High Commission, and of the royal prerogative enforced by the Star Chamber, Laud set to work resolutely to purge the Church of Calvinism, and to educate her congregations to return to the doctrine and worship of the primitive Church, as maintained in the formularies, and illustrated by the rubrics, of the Church of England. He knew that the struggle would be a severe one. He was prepared, if need be, that it should be a struggle for life or death. For eighty years Calvinism had claimed to be the true representation of the religion of the Church of England. It had in fact represented the religion of the majority of the people of England. Now it was demanding, not merely toleration in the Church, but uncontrolled supremacy over the

Uncompro-  
mising  
nature of  
the struggle



Church, and the Commons had endorsed the demand. The Lambeth Articles had been pronounced by the House to contain the true teaching of the Church. The Arminians had been publicly denounced as traitors. The House of Commons had taken upon itself the office of judge in ecclesiastical matters. Clearly, then, the duel would be no light matter. The fortunes of the Church of England—of historical Christianity in England—were in the balance. More than once since the Reformation had it seemed possible that the political exigencies of Elizabeth or the caprice of James might have forced them into compromise with Calvinism. Compromise was now no longer possible. With whichever side the victory lay, there would be no room for the other within the limits of its authority. Laud recognised this fact, and, taking ‘Thorough’ for his watchword, set himself to his task.

The Royal Declaration of 1628 was very generally successful in its object of preventing the teaching of purely Calvinistic tenets from the pulpits of the Church. Those who had contravened it, of whom Davenant, Bishop of Salisbury, and some ‘unquiet spirits’ in the University of Oxford, were the most important, were easily silenced. In 1630, Laud followed up his success by the issue of certain Instructions which were to be imposed by the Archbishops on the Bishops of their respective provinces, and were, like the Declaration of 1628, promulgated solely on the authority of the King. These Instructions were directed against the courtier Bishops and trencher-chaplains, as Heylin calls them, quite as much as against the Puritans.

Apparent  
success of  
the policy of  
silencing  
controversy

The Instruc-  
tions of 1630

Bishops were commanded to reside in their dioceses and live in their Episcopal houses, and to be careful and regular in their ordinations and visitations. None except those permitted by law were to be allowed to have private chaplains. Lecturers were to read Divine service in their surplices before the delivery of the lecture. No lecturer maintained by a corporation was to be permitted to preach unless he was prepared to accept a benefice with cure of souls, and the Bishops were strictly enjoined to inform themselves 'how the lecturers and preachers behaved themselves in their sermons.'

In many parishes, especially in towns, where the population was Calvinistic but the incumbent was either a dull preacher or an Anglican, funds had been provided by the Puritan parishioners for the foundation of a lectureship in private patronage. The lecturer held a preaching licence from the Bishop, and, arrayed in a Geneva cloak, preached a sermon on Sunday afternoons to an overflowing congregation, which assembled to hear the sermon after the incumbent had finished reading the service to an almost empty church. By obliging the lecturer to read the service before he began his sermon, and to wear a surplice, Laud hoped to put an end to the supersession of the incumbent in his own church. By forcing the Bishop to be resident, and to take notice of the doctrine preached by the lecturers, he not only took away a just cause of grievance, but strengthened materially the machinery for enforcing discipline.

A few years later a very similar difficulty presented itself for solution in his own diocese of London. Some

London Puritans had subscribed together to buy tithes, which had fallen into the hands of laymen, and with the income arising from them, paid stipends to lecturers and schoolmasters, by means of which they hoped to secure continuity of Calvinistic teaching. These 'feoffees for impropriations,' as they were technically called, were in fact the Simeon Trustees of the seventeenth century. Laud was not slow to perceive the danger. His Chaplain, Peter Heylin, openly called attention to this system of sowing tares among the wheat, in a sermon preached in 1630; and in 1632, the King's Attorney-General charged the 'feoffees' in the Exchequer Chamber with illegally holding property without the sanction of the King. The court decided against them, and their patronage was forfeited to the Crown. Thus was removed from Laud's path an organisation which might have done much to maintain and support Calvinistic teaching, especially in London, where some of the most popular and most devout of the lecturers were paid from this source.

But in his own diocese Laud was not content with merely removing obstacles from his path, he wished also to put before men's eyes the spectacle of the Church as she might be, if only her children were true to her teaching. Even with the royal power at his back it was not possible for him to do much in the subordinate capacity of Bishop of London; yet during the five years in which he filled that post he succeeded in repairing the fabric of St. Paul's Cathedral, in demolishing the small houses which, clustering round it, prevented the full propor-

*The restoration of St. Paul's*

tions of its wonderful nave from being seen, and in checking the worst of the irreverence and profanity which had for so many years polluted its aisles. The complete restoration of the much-decayed building was not finished when Laud was imprisoned in 1640; but it is reckoned that before his fall he had collected and spent no less a sum than 100,000*l.* on the fabric. His love of orderly ceremonial which had been shown so signally in the coronation in 1625, was displayed on a larger scale in the consecration of St. Catherine Cree in 1631, and in the revival, whenever possible, of the old practice of bowing to the east on entering a church.

But it was not until he was raised to the Archbishopric of Canterbury in 1633, on the death of Abbot, that Laud was really able to take the general revival of discipline seriously in hand. By that time most of the sees in England were in the hands of men who, if not personal followers of his own, were, at any rate, not Calvinists. Joseph Hall, who day by day was gradually emancipating himself from the Calvinism in which he had been bred, occupied the important see of Exeter. Juxon, Laud's successor at St. John's, succeeded him in London. Pierce went to Bath and Wells, Curll to Winchester; Bancroft, a nephew of the late Archbishop, to Oxford; White, the coadjutor of Laud in his controversy with Fisher, followed Bucke-ridge at Rochester, and Neile, Laud's former patron and firm friend, presided over the northern province. With men like these in command under him, he could reckon on loyal support. His hand grasped the tiller resolutely, as he steered the gallant ship against the advancing

waves, sure that she would answer to his slightest pressure.

No sooner had he settled himself at Lambeth, than he proceeded to hold a visitation of his province. For three years Sir Nathaniel Brent, his vicar-general, attended by Heylin, his chaplain, moved from diocese to diocese in the province of Canterbury, inquiring into abuses and evasions of the law. From all sides were heard similar stories of neglect and of carelessness and of irreverence. Surplices were not worn, kneeling at the reception of the Communion was not enforced. The Holy Table standing in the middle of the nave was used for ordinary business, or even as a convenient seat. Cathedral Chapters were remiss in the training of their choristers, neglected their preaching duties, and were often non-resident. Churches were reported as ill-kept and ruinous. Trainbands met in the churchyards, Clergy openly attacked their parishioners by name from the pulpit, Church property was stolen or wasted. With such irregularities the law was powerful enough to cope. Unhesitatingly Laud enforced obedience upon all offenders alike, whether their offence arose from carelessness or conscientious prejudice. One by one disappeared from the churches of England all peculiarities which sprang from individual preference, as well as from criminal laxity. Uniformity of internal arrangement took the place of the chaos which had existed before.

To an Englishman born under James I., to whom the Elizabethan struggles seemed the beginnings of the national life, and the Elizabethan government the perfection of wisdom, these changes

The metro-  
political  
visitation,  
1633-1636

Its unpopu-  
larity

appeared as innovations on an established and time-honoured order of things. To a theologian or a student of history they appeared, as indeed they were, merely a revival of what had more or less existed ever since the breach with Rome, and what was plainly intended to exist. The conservative instinct of the people, which ought really to have been on the side of Laud, was thus enlisted against him, and each fresh step that he took confirmed the misconstruction. The publication of the 'Declaration of Sports' in 1633, though merely directed against so great an interference with the open-air amusements of the people on Sunday, as was likely to drive them into ale-houses, appeared to a large part of the more religious laity as a direct incentive to break the fourth commandment.

The order for removal of the Altars to the east end of the churches caused the greatest opposition. Ever since his success at Gloucester in 1622, Laud had been strenuous in urging this whenever an opportunity offered, and now the visitors had distinct orders to effect the change throughout the province. The reason assigned was the necessity of guarding against the desecration of the Altars by careless or irreverent conduct; but no one knew better than Laud himself that a far deeper question lay underneath. The moveable Table in the middle of the church, unprotected and uncovered, spoke eloquently enough of the mere commemoration of the Passion, which Calvinists taught was all that the Communion signified. The Altar, fixed to the east end of the chancel, railed off from prying eyes and irreverent hands, vested in its

The removal  
of the altars  
to the east  
end

rich hangings of silk, spoke no less plainly of the Altar-throne and the Eucharistic mystery.

Besides, controversy had already arisen upon that very point. In 1626 a dispute had occurred at Grant-ham, in the diocese of Lincoln, in which <sup>Williams' attempted compromise</sup> Williams with characteristic worldly wisdom endeavoured to arrive at a compromise which might gain the approbation of the Puritans without incurring the displeasure of the court. Construing the conflicting rubrics to mean that the Altar was ordinarily to stand at the east end, but to be removed into the body of the church whenever the Holy Communion was celebrated, he justified his decision on the express ground that to permit the Altar to remain at the east end during the celebration of the Communion would be to acknowledge the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice. After that controversy every Puritan looked upon the permanent removal of the Altars with a repugnance which was based upon deep religious conviction. To enforce such a change throughout the whole province of Canterbury, without any regard to the feelings of the parishioners, was to impose uniformity at the price of destroying unity. It was in vain that Laud attempted to defend it on the ground of decency and order. The Puritans felt with true instinct that it was an attack upon their religious principles, and resented it accordingly.

The energy of the archbishop was not confined to the limits of his province. It came to his ears that chaplains on board his Majesty's ships, and attached to English regiments in foreign service, and even those in the service of English merchant companies, habitually

neglected the use of the Prayer Book, or merely chose at their own discretion a few prayers out of it which they would read as a prelude to the sermon. Pressure was soon brought to bear upon the companies and upon the Dutch Government, and a summary stop was put to irregularities of this sort. Men who wished to escape from the pressure of uniformity were no longer able to betake themselves across the Channel to Holland, but had with Winthrop to cross the ocean to Massachusetts and New Plymouth.

The activity which sought out breaches of discipline in Holland was not likely to overlook them in Oxford.

Enforcement of the use of the Prayer Book by chaplains abroad In 1630 Laud had become Chancellor of the University on the death of Pembroke, and at once the influence of his zealous will was seen. The King's Declaration against controversy was rigidly enforced and offenders punished. The disorders, which had of late years grown to an almost unbearable pitch, were promptly suppressed. The statutes of the University were revised, and the election of Proctors given to the Colleges in rotation.

Laud's interference in Oxford It was this bustling activity which made Laud so obnoxious to those who wanted to be allowed to go on quietly in the way to which they had been accustomed. Nothing was too great, nothing too insignificant for his attention. Whatever the offence, Laud was certain to be in some capacity or other the judge. Did one of the Queen's ladies of honour fare badly at the hands of her husband, or did one of the parishioners of Hardwick christen a cat, it was Laud that was the moving spirit of the court which pronounced sentence. When the parishioners of St.

Universality of Laud's influence



Gregory's close by St. Paul's petitioned the Court of Arches to replace the Altar in the nave, it was Laud that procured the removal of the cause to the Privy Council, where the King was certain to decide against the petitioners. It was Laud's hand that put the final touches to the Scotch canons and liturgy, perhaps his mind that suggested to Charles to embark on his ill-omened course of interference in Scotland. When Prynne attacked the 'Declaration of Sports' and libelled the Queen, it was Laud's voice that urged the sharpest sentence. When Chief Justice Richardson was summoned before the Council for ordering the Clergy to read his denunciations of the Somersetshire wakes, it was a pair of lawn sleeves, as he said bitterly, that nearly choked him.

Restless, energetic, determined to do his duty whatever happened, Laud applied his discipline with equal impartiality. Humble conventicles were overthrown, foreign refugees were obliged to adopt the Prayer Book, Puritan books were rigidly suppressed, and those of an opposite tendency too laxly licensed. Squires who had long lorded it over God's heritage had now to account for encroachments on the glebe and the churchyard. Parishioners who had dared to threaten the minister or the sidesmen in the discharge of their duties had to answer for their offence to the Bishop. Those who refused to come to church, or came merely to hear the sermon, or frequented other parishes than their own, were presented by the churchwardens together with the drunken, the impure, and the seditious. The Visitation Articles of the Bishops, issued between 1630 and 1640, show a de-

Enforce-  
ment of dis-  
cipline over  
the laity as  
well as over  
the clergy

termination to revive discipline over the laity, quite as strong as that to enforce discipline over the Clergy. Each householder was to see that his children and his household came to be catechised in the afternoons. Every married woman was to come to be churched the first time she left the house after confinement. All parishioners were to bow lowly at the name of Jesus, to uncover their heads during the service, to receive the Holy Communion kneeling three times in the year at least, of which Easter should be one. Tradesmen were forbidden to open their shops on Sunday, and inn-keepers strictly charged not to permit any drinking or gaming in their houses during the time of Divine service.

Thus the discipline of the Church was brought to bear upon every department of the life of a generation that was little fitted to receive it. It interfered with a man's management of his household, with his trade, with his amusements, as well as with his religious life and religious duties. What wonder if it became equally hateful to the immoral, to the careless, and to the precise? That it should meet with the opposition of the two former classes was natural, but that it failed to secure the support of the mass of pure-thinking, simple-minded Englishmen is its strongest condemnation. Just when they wanted the gentle encouragement of a sympathetic leader, they found themselves under the unyielding yoke of a punitive system. It might be possible to lead men to juster notions of religion than Puritanism offered. It might be possible to force men for a time into outward conformity to a system they abhorred. It was quite impossible to convince them by punishments.

Galling  
nature of  
this policy

The enforcement of discipline by Laud over the laity as well as over the Clergy, during the seven years of his uncontrolled supremacy, had the political result of turning what had been a constitutional opposition in alliance with Puritanism, into a religious opposition in alliance with constitutionalism. Hatred of Laud and all his works became the central principle of action among the majority of the Commons in the Long Parliament. Men who in 1630 were content with asserting the right of Parliament to inquire into ecclesiastical abuses, were found in 1640 ready to attack Episcopacy itself. Laud could not understand anything of this. When Hyde told him plainly at Lambeth that 'many spoke extreme ill of his Grace as the cause of all that was done amiss,' Laud merely replied that he was sorry for it, but it was his duty to serve God and the King. He knew of what value he himself had found the regularity of a disciplined life. He saw how his friends and associates, who had accepted loyally the full teaching of the Church, naturally accepted with it the discipline which was in part its expression. He could not conceive why a system so salutary when accepted by some should not be salutary when imposed upon all. Blindly, resolutely, and coldly, he hurried forward to his fall. He must serve God and the King. He knew of but one method of service. It was his duty to pursue that method whatever might come. To the very last he was ignorant of the true feeling of the nation; yet when the blow fell he received it calmly, almost passively.

In 1639 the reports of the Bishops to Laud on the state of their dioceses show a quieting of the spirit of

Nonconformity, and more general acquiescence in the revival of discipline. In 1640 he consented that Convocation should continue to sit under the name of a Synod after Parliament was dissolved, and pass a code of canons in order to justify, by *ex post facto* legislation, anything of doubtful legality which had been done in previous years by his orders. In the December of that year he records the downfall of all his hopes in words which are pathetic by their very impassiveness: 'December 16, Wednesday. The canons condemned in the House of Commons, as being against the King's prerogative, the fundamental laws of the realm, the Liberty and Propriety of the Subject, and containing divers other things tending to sedition and of dangerous consequence. Upon this I was made the author of them, and a committee put upon me to inquire into all my actions and to prepare a charge.—December 18th, Friday, I was accused by the House of Commons for High Treason without any particular charge laid against me. . . I stayed at Lambeth till the evening, to avoid the gazing of the people. I went to Evening Prayer in my chappel. The Psalms of the day, Psal. xciii. and xciv., and chap. 1. of Isai., gave me great comfort. God make me worthy of it and fit to receive it. As I went to my barge hundreds of my poor neighbours stood there and prayed for my safety and return to my house. For which I bless God and them.' A man who can record so calmly the wreck of so many hopes must have had either a power of self-control and detachment from worldly things which seems hardly compatible with a career like that of Laud, or must have in secret been long preparing for the blow

that seemed to others to fall so suddenly. It was his duty to persevere even when failure seemed to be certain, to fill vacant sees with men of staunch orthodoxy, even when Episcopacy itself seemed about to be destroyed, to improve Church discipline by fresh ecclesiastical legislation even when Parliament was claiming supremacy over Church and Crown. Prepared for the darkness when it should come, it was his business to work on as long as there was daylight wherein to work.

And in the recesses of his own heart he must have felt that, however complete might be the downfall of his system of government, the principles which underlay that system had in reality triumphed.

The eventual triumph of his principles

Discipline might have failed, but devotion and knowledge had succeeded. Rubrics and canons would be swept away, but faith had been strengthened and would outlive the storm. The revival which is connected with the name of Laud had been a religious movement and an intellectual movement before it was a political movement. It would remain a religious and an intellectual movement after its political influence had passed away. It had been associated with the names of Hooker and Andrewes before those of Charles and of Wentworth. It would be connected in the eyes of posterity with Sancroft and Bull, rather than with Windebank or Montague. It had shown itself capable of attracting men as different in characters and in principles as Hyde, Chillingworth, and De Dominis. It had not been without its influence upon Milton. It had allied itself with learning in the persons of Hammond, of Pococke, and of Cosin. It found the expression of

its thought in the guarded pages of Sanderson, and in the ornate eloquence of Jeremy Taylor; of its disciplined self-training in the quiet introspection of George Herbert; of its enthusiastic self-surrender in the uplifted devotion of Crashaw; of its practical piety in the life of Nicholas Ferrar.

Under the superintendence of Nicholas Ferrar, in the community of Little Gidding, is seen the most complete realisation in practical life of the principles of Laud. Unlike similar movements in our own day, the religious revival of the seventeenth century fled from the towns and the busy haunts of men, and took refuge in quiet country parsonages and contemplative retreats. It was out of sympathy with the mass of mankind. It could not enter into their thoughts and feelings, it could not associate itself with their passionate desires. It fled from them to the place where a man lives apart from the world, and looks out on its turmoil and its bustle as from a watch-tower, with the interest of a philosopher perhaps, but in the security of a shielded life.

As Laud looked out upon men from the court or the University, so George Herbert and Nicholas Ferrar looked out upon them from the shadow of a religious retreat. All alike found the remedy for the disorders of the time in the training of the character by the life of discipline. At Little Gidding were being wrought out, perfected by the voluntary choice of its inmates, the principles which Herbert was urging upon the individual soul and Laud was seeking to enforce upon England. At the entrance to 'The Church,' in the 'Porch' which

Their exem-  
plification at  
Little  
Gidding

Connexion  
between  
George  
Herbert,  
Nicholas  
Ferrar, and  
Laud

the soul has to traverse before it can taste of the beauties of the interior, Herbert had urged the necessity of discipline.

‘Thou livest by rule ! What doth not so but man ?  
Houses are built by rule and Commonwealths.  
Entice the trusty sun, if that you can,  
From his ecliptic line : beckon the sky !  
Who lives by rule, then, keeps good company.  
Who keeps no guard upon himself is slack,  
And rots to nothing at the next great thaw.  
Man is a shop of rules, a well-trussed pack,  
Whose every parcel underwrites a law.  
Lose not thyself, nor give thy humours way,  
God gave them to thee under lock and key.’

It was in this spirit that the method of life at Little Gidding was conceived. There was no compulsion, there was not even the assistance of a temporary vow. Each inmate was free to come and go as he pleased, but while there he had to obey the injunctions of a severe rule. Constant employment in work or in prayer was imposed on every one ; and every work, whether spiritual or temporal, was done thoroughly and self-denyingly. There was no sparing of self, no making of terms with the sloth which Herbert said was the besetting sin of England. There was little of enthusiasm about this Protestant nunnery, as it was called. There was nothing of the fierce longing for spiritual triumph that has so often nerved the devotees of asceticism to do heroic deeds. Crashaw used to bring his ardent mind and his affectionate nature to the service of Little Gidding, riding over in the long summer days from Cambridge ; but when there even his impassioned soul seemed to

breathe more of the spirit of quiet dutifulness than of the ecstatic devotion of which it loved to speak.

No cruel guard of diligent cares that keep  
Crowned woes awake, as things too wise for sleep,  
But reverent discipline and religious fear  
And soft obedience find sweet bidding here—  
Silence and sacred rest ; peace and pure joys.

Such was the spirit which reigned in the calm retreat of Nicholas Ferrar, unmolested by the strivings of politics, and unaffected by the disputes of religious partisans.

It is easy to understand the charm which such a place had for the weary King, who extended to Ferrar his countenance and visited him himself. It is easy also to realise how a religious movement which satisfied the intellectual questionings of Hooker and of Jeremy Taylor, produced the saintly purity of Andrewes and of Crashaw, and called forth from rugged Englishmen the disciplined devotion of Ferrar and of Herbert, must have so answered to the fundamental cravings of human nature, as to have in it something which would rise again triumphant though its system might appear to have been wrecked, and its power to have vanished into air.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE TRIUMPH OF PURITANISM.

ON November 3, 1640, the Long Parliament met, and the house of cards that Laud had been so long erecting with such infinite pains, crumbled into nothing at the touch of the wand of public opinion. The debates in the Short Parliament earlier in the year had shown pretty plainly, that, although it was the enforcement of conformity by pains and penalties of which the Commons chiefly complained, yet they were not likely to rest content until Nonconformity received the sanction of the law. The code of canons which had been passed by the Convocation of Canterbury after the dissolution of Parliament increased the bitter feeling with which the Bishops were regarded. The assertion of the divine right of kings, the order for the placing of the Altars altarwise, and for bowing at the name of Jesus, and especially the imposition of the famous *et-cætera* oath, so excited the passions of Puritan London, that Lambeth was attacked by a riotous mob, and the High Commission Court forced to take refuge at St. Paul's. Laud had done his best to prevent Puritanism from finding a place within the pale of the English Church, and had driven Nonconformity across the sea. Puritanism now, in its turn triumphant, was not likely to give quarter to so dangerous an opponent. The day of generosity was past, that of retribution had come. The cry of 'Down with Puritanism'

Reversal of  
Laud's policy  
by the  
Long Par-  
liament

was met with the counter cry of 'Down with Episcopacy.' Logic had won the battle over statesmanship; consistency had triumphed over compromise. If Calvinism and the 'Book of Discipline' could find no place in the system of the Church of England, Episcopacy and the Prayer Book were found to be equally out of harmony with victorious Calvinism.

Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that the majority of the House of Commons were determined to get rid of Episcopacy and to destroy the Church. They might believe in the existence of a plot, fomented by Laud and Strafford, and connived at by Charles, to bring England back to Popery. They might demand, importunately enough, the impeachment of the Archbishop; but it was because they hated ecclesiastical interference and feared ecclesiastical tyranny, not because they were Presbyterians or Independents. As usual, between the extremes of either side there was a mass of floating opinion which thought little of theory and set little value upon consistency, but which busied itself wholly with practical evils of administration. Men did not stop to inquire upon what principles that administration proceeded. They were not clear-sighted enough to see that, though the method of Laud was wrong, his principles might be right; and that it was impossible to sweep away at a blow his whole method of administration without endangering the principles upon which it was based. They contented themselves with demanding the immediate abolition of the grievances which pressed upon them, without considering what was to be put in their place.

Speaker after speaker arose in the House of Commons

at the beginning of the Long Parliament to denounce interference with individual liberty, the ceremonial regulations, and the 'Book of Sports.' They Attempts at compromise were ready if necessary to sacrifice Episcopacy rather than again submit themselves to such a government, but against Episcopacy, if it could be severed from such a government, they had no grudge. The idea of a limited Episcopacy, *i.e.* of a system of Church government in which the Bishop should be but the chairman of a ruling committee of presbyters, visionary as it was, found favour with minds like those of Falkland and Ussher. This of itself is sufficient to show how anxiously a compromise was being sought which should preserve individual liberty, and not offend against ecclesiastical tradition. In reality, such a compromise was no longer possible, and even if possible would have been useless.

The source of the evils was to be found, not in the enforcement of the discipline of the Church upon Churchmen, but in its enforcement upon those Toleration the only real solution of the difficulty who were not Churchmen at all. The grievance lay, not in the fact that the Bishops compelled the services of the Church to be conducted in accordance with the directions of the Prayer Book and the canons, but in the fact that Englishmen, who looked upon services conducted in accordance with the directions of the Prayer Book and the canons as superstitious, if not blasphemous, were not only compelled to attend them, but were rigorously prohibited from conducting more congenial services elsewhere. In a word, the true solution of the ecclesiastical difficulty was to be found in the toleration of

Nonconformity, not in the alteration of Church government; but religious toleration was, as yet, as far from the ideas of any seventeenth century statesman as free trade. It took fifteen years of unchallenged Puritan ascendancy to prove that the Church of England would never become Calvinistic. It took thirty years of the assured supremacy of the Church to prove that the Church could never absorb Calvinism. It was necessary that both these facts should be recognised before either religion could learn to live in peace side by side with the other.

Since toleration was impossible there was nothing left but war, and in a time of war the extreme men, who at any rate know their own mind and have a definite policy, naturally come to the front. The philosophic Falkland, in the interests as he conceived of intellectual liberty, professed himself satisfied with the placing of the exercise of Episcopal authority under the control of Parliament. Sir Harbottle Grimston, in the interests of good government, was content with the withdrawal from the Bishops of all temporal jurisdiction. Bagshaw, with keener political insight, denounced Episcopacy itself as a thing which, '*statu corrupto* as it is this day, trencheth not only from the rights and liberties of the subject, but of the Crown of England.' When all parties agreed that some change was necessary, and only one party was zealous and determined, and knew exactly what change it wanted, its policy naturally became the one round which the battle raged. There was no opposition offered to the abolition of the new canons, and the impeachment of Laud, Cosin, Wren, and Windebank in the

Growth of  
an anti-  
episcopal  
party in  
Parliament

winter of 1640. The courts of the High Commission and the Star Chamber were swept away with universal satisfaction in the summer of 1641. But directly the question of the abolition of Episcopacy was brought to the front a division of opinion manifested itself in Parliament, which a few months afterwards gave Charles a party and enabled him to try the fortune of war.

✓ Meanwhile events were moving fast. As early as December 11, 1640, a petition was presented to

Measures  
against the  
Church in-  
troduced  
into Parlia-  
ment

the Commons for the 'abolition of Episcopacy, root and branch,' signed by 15,000 Londoners. On February 8, 1641, it was debated whether the petition should be considered, and it was on that occasion that Falkland, Grimston, and Bagshaw took the opportunity of declaring their different policies with regard to the Church. In the end the grievances complained of were referred to a committee, but the question of Episcopacy was retained for the decision of the House. On January 12 a petition had been laid before the Commons from Kent, praying for the total abolition of hierarchical power. On January 23 the Commons ordered on their own authority, without a shadow of legal right, that 'commissions be sent into all counties for the defacing, demolition, and quite taking away of all images, altars or tables turned altarwise, crucifixes, superstitious pictures, monuments and relics of idolatry out of all churches or chapels.' On February 24 the articles of impeachment against Laud were agreed to. The archbishop was accused of high treason in having attempted to alter the religion and the fundamental laws of the realm, and was committed to the Tower on March 1,

after escaping with some difficulty from the hands of an angry mob. On March 10 the Commons resolved that 'the right of the bishops to sit in the House of Lords was prejudicial to the Commonwealth;' and on the following day, that 'the clergy should cease to act in commissions of the peace, or have any judicial power in civil courts.' By the middle of May, Bills to give effect to these resolutions were sent up to the Lords. On the 27th a Bill for the extirpation of Episcopacy, drawn by St. John and Haselrig, but entrusted to the charge of Dering, was read a second time by the Commons by a majority of twenty-seven, in spite of the opposition of Falkland. On June 15 a resolution dealing with deans, chapters, and all cathedral officers in the same way, and applying their emoluments 'to the advancement of learning and piety,' passed the House and was embodied in a Bill.

Yet it seems clear that all this was the work of a party which could not command the support of a majority of Parliament, much less of the country, in their favour. Pym and Hampden, who carried with them a sufficient following to turn the scale in the House of Commons, seem to have voted for the Root and Branch Bill simply as a reply to Charles' insensate schemes of tampering with the army; for Hampden himself assured Falkland, before the Army Plot was revealed, that if the Bill for excluding the Bishops from the House of Lords was passed by the Peers there would be nothing more attempted to the prejudice of the Church.

In the Upper House, opinion, though not in favour of the Bishops, was distinctly in favour of Episcopacy,

and resented keenly any interference on the part of the Commons. Even while the terror of the Army Plot was still fresh in the minds of all, the Peers threw out the Bishops' Exclusion Bill by a large majority. The Root and Branch Bill died a natural death in committee in the Lower House. Among the Commons themselves, a proposal of the Scotch for the establishment of Presbyterianism in England aroused national as well as ecclesiastical feeling against any radical alteration of Church government. The dread of the replacement of the tyranny of responsible Bishops by the far worse tyranny of irresponsible presbyters found a place in the outspoken remonstrances of the Cheshire petitioners, as well as in the half-expressed thoughts of the small but growing party of Independents.

But, as usual, it was not love for Episcopacy or dislike of Presbyterianism in the abstract, so much as the fear of anarchy, that made men come back again to the standard of the Church. Already it seemed to many that directly Laud's hand was removed from the helm all was confusion. The churches were in many places wrecked and despoiled by the Commissioners for the removal of monuments of superstition. Sectarian congregations were springing up on all sides in the larger towns, and the office of preacher was every day being appropriated by men and women of low extraction and no education,—self-constituted teachers, who thought that a hearty hatred of Episcopal government was the only qualification required. 'Another thing,' says May, 'which seemed to trouble some who were not bad men, was that extreme licence which the common people almost from the very beginning of the Parliament took to themselves, of reforming with-

Danger of  
religious  
anarchy

out authority, order, or decency; rudely disturbing Church service whilst the Common Prayer was reading, tearing the books, surplices, and such things, which the Parliament did not so far restrain as was expected or desired by those men. To this were added those daily reports of ridiculous conventicles and preachings made by tradesmen and illiterate people of the lowest rank, to the scandal and offence of many.'<sup>1</sup>

As this unchecked licence and lawlessness increased day by day during the summer and autumn of 1641, so did that party increase in numbers and influence which clung to monarchy and Episcopacy as the surest bulwarks against revolution; until by the end of the year the same assembly which in February had voted the impeachment of Laud without a dissentient voice, gave in November but a bare majority of nine to the policy of the Grand Remonstrance. After the vote on the Grand Remonstrance it was almost impossible to avoid a civil war. Pym and his friends had decided that in no case could Charles again be trusted with the government of the country. They had called upon the nation to support them in establishing the supremacy of the Parliament over the King. To gain a majority for this policy, even in the House of Commons, they had been obliged to buy the support of the Root and Branch reformers, and to add to their programme the abolition of the Church as well as the permanent weakening of the monarchy.

But here they found themselves threatened by the conservative as well as the loyal instincts of the nation. Englishmen were not going with a light heart to alter

<sup>1</sup> May, *History of the Long Parliament*, p. 113.



the balance of the constitution, or part with the oldest institution in the country, because Charles had governed badly, and Laud had harshly enforced an unpopular discipline. By insensible degrees, as the attack on the institutions of the country developed, so did the number of their defenders increase. The Episcopalian party, which had been unable to throw out the Root and Branch Bill in the spring of 1641, had by the autumn become a Royalist party, which commanded the majority in the Lords, divided the allegiance of the Commons, and, if appearances could be trusted, seemed to have the bulk of the nation at its back.

When parties were so evenly divided the sword alone could decide between them. Charles, as usual, did his best to throw his chances away. His impeachment of the five members, and his evident subservience to the Queen, alienated just the very men—patriots rather than loyalists—whose support gave him his real strength. Yet, when the war broke out, his person and his office became a rallying-point for all who wished to preserve the institutions of the country. The question which agitated men's minds, and decided them to draw their swords for King or for Parliament, was no longer that of opposition to unconstitutional government, or of hatred to ecclesiastical tyranny. It was not even that of the duty of passive obedience to constituted authority. It was the far deeper question of the maintenance or the destruction of the institutions of the country—of the preservation of the Church and of the monarchy, and of the supremacy of law, against revolution, and eventu-

The Episcopalian party becomes a Royalist party

Real nature of the question at issue in the Civil War

ally against anarchy. Falkland, who had advocated a limited Episcopacy, and urged the attainder of Strafford; Culpepper, who had carried up to the Lords the impeachment of Berkeley for his decision in the ship-money case; Hyde, who had done more than any man to sweep away the unconstitutional courts, and to vindicate the supremacy of the law; Dering, who had introduced the Root and Branch Bill; Bagshaw, who had taken the lead in denouncing Episcopacy, were all found with the King at Oxford in the winter of 1642.

On the other hand, the Commons had ceased to be representative of the whole nation since the passing of the Remonstrance, and had become merely representative of a part of the nation. After the bulk of the Peers and of the Royalist members had left Westminster in May and June 1642, the Parliament became avowedly only the executive of a party, and legislated as far as its power extended in the interest merely of that party.

The work of overthrowing the Church was carried on with all the rapidity that political exigencies permitted or required. The excitement which followed on the impeachment of the five members in January 1642 was used to push the Bishops' Exclusion Bill through both Houses, and to extort from Charles a reluctant consent. In March a petition from the grand jury of Kent, praying for the preservation of the dignity of the Church and the solemnity of her services from the attacks of heresy and profaneness, was voted seditious, and the principal signatories were proceeded against criminally. In the following month a resolution was arrived at by both

The Commons become merely the representatives of a party

Passing of measures hostile to the Church

Houses stating their intention to undertake a thorough reformation of the Church with the assistance of an assembly of divines nominated by themselves; and in the Nineteen Propositions delivered to the King in June, his consent to this scheme was demanded as a condition of peace. In September a promise was given to the Scotch that Episcopacy should be abolished, and the promise was fulfilled four months later by the passing of the Root and Branch Bill through both Houses as a condition of entering upon the negotiations for peace with the King at Oxford. The violence of the Puritan mobs, especially in London, had been steadily increasing ever since the departure of the King. Carved stonework and painted windows were destroyed on all sides by the commissioners of the Parliament. Communion rails were torn down and Church services interrupted by excited bands of sectaries. Cheapside Cross was taken away by order of the Common Council.

It is easy enough to destroy; the difficulty is how to rebuild. Hitherto the Parliament had contented itself with abolishing much of the Church  
Necessity of propitiating the Scots system, without caring to face the question of reconstruction, but they could remain no longer in this negative attitude. The success of the King's arms in the field in the spring of 1643 forced them to draw nearer to the Scots; and the aid of the Scots, it was well known, was only to be given on one condition—the establishment of Presbyterianism. But what chances were there that free England, which had just shaken off the yoke of Episcopal discipline, would bind itself with the fetters of the Genevan model? What chances were there that the Separatists, already so

prominent in London and becoming so powerful in the army, would submit to uniformity in any shape? But the time was short. Each post brought news of some fresh success of the royal forces. The risk must be run. London was strongly Presbyterian at heart, if England was not; and daily it was becoming increasingly evident that London was the backbone of the Parliamentary cause. By June 1643, after the battle of Stratton and the detection of Waller's plot, the Houses had made up their minds to make advances. 'In order that such a government may be settled on the Church as may be most agreeable to God's holy word and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad,' an ordinance was passed which called into existence the long-promised 'Assembly of Divines and others' who were to advise the Parliament for the better reformation of the Church.

The Assembly had hardly met when the news of the defeat of Fairfax at Adwalton Moor, and that of Waller at Roundway Down, came to hasten their work. A request was forwarded to the Scots to send some divines to the Assembly at Westminster, and an army of 11,000 men to the help of the Parliament in the north. Vane was sent at the head of a body of commissioners to Edinburgh to arrange the terms of an offensive and defensive alliance. By the middle of August 1643 the Solemn League and Covenant was agreed upon by the commissioners and accepted by the Scots. Before the end of September

The Solemn  
League and  
Covenant

it was adopted by the Westminster Assembly and by Parliament.

It is true that the Covenant thus imposed upon England did not in terms provide for the establishment of Presbyterianism in the place of the Church. Terms of the alliance Indeed, special care was taken to avoid the use of words which would prevent Independents from subscribing the oath. But it was idle to deny that a long step had been taken in that direction. By it Parliament and the Assembly pledged themselves not merely to the abolition of Church government by Archbishops and Bishops, but to the 'preservation of the Church of Scotland in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, and to the reformation of the Church of England according to the word of God and the example of the best Reformed Churches;' and Scottish ministers, bound to further Presbyterianism by every means in their power, took their places in the Assembly of Divines.

From that time until the Restoration, the Church may be said to have been in abeyance in England. Practically the abolition of the Church Ecclesiastical affairs were carried on by bodies hostile to her doctrine and discipline. The ruling power in the State entered into a solemn league with her avowed enemies. The triumph of Puritanism over the Church is complete when Episcopacy is abolished and the Covenant enforced. If Laud, hearing of the Covenant in his prison cell, reflected how his attempt to impose Episcopacy upon Scotland seemed now likely to end in an attempt to impose Presbyterianism upon England, he might have taken comfort from the thought that his own experience had

shown how little able are Governments to control or even to guide the religious aspirations of a people. In spite of all that Parliament had done, there was no more likelihood of England becoming Presbyterian than there was of Scotland becoming Catholic, whatever Governments might say or do.

Puritanism, having emerged victorious from the struggle with the Church, had now to justify its assumption of power. Would it prove itself capable of satisfying the religious wants of the nation, or at any rate satisfying them better than the Church had done? Would England be happier and better under Parliament and the Assembly than it had been under Charles and Convocation? From the first there was a serious difficulty in the way. The Government was at its best but the Government of half the nation. It had allied itself for political purposes with Presbyterianism; and with Presbyterianism the most capable and the most strenuous of its own supporters had no sympathy whatever.

The Brownists, who had been driven over to Holland by Whitgift in Elizabeth's reign, came back reinforced by a great number of different sects. These were known by a great number of different names, such as Separatists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and the like, but to all of them there was one great principle in common, namely, the repudiation of ecclesiastical organisation, the insistence on the right of the individual soul to seek its own terms of reconciliation with God. It was this principle of Independency in religion that made the great body of them to be known by the general title of Independents.

The diff-  
culties of the  
triumphant  
Puritanism

Radical  
differences  
between the  
Presby-  
terians and  
the Inde-  
pendents

Such a principle, although it might clothe itself in Presbyterian forms, was radically opposed to the essence of Presbyterianism as a vital force; namely, the necessity of clerical organisation empowered to regulate minutely both the faith and conduct of mankind. No two parties could be more distinct. They agreed, it is true, in a common Calvinistic basis of faith, but there their agreement ended. To the Independent, Calvinistic individualism led naturally to liberty of conscience. To the Presbyterian, Calvinistic severity necessitated an iron rule of faith and discipline.

Hitherto Independency had been of little account, but it grew in importance day by day as the war went on. By the end of 1643 it had taken great hold on the rank and file of the army. Already in the eastern counties were being trained under Cromwell's eye the first troops of that body of irresistible cavalry who were to give the death-blow to both monarchy and Presbyterianism at Marston Moor, at Naseby, and at Worcester. Already the Scottish divines in the Assembly scented the battle that was coming upon them. 'We doubt not to carie all in the Assemblie and Parliament clearlie according to our mind,' says the honest Baillie, one of the Scottish divines, in 1644; 'but if we carie not the Independents with us, there will be ground laid for a verie troublesome schisme. Always it's our care to prevent that dangerous evil.'

For the time the Presbyterians had the advantage. The Westminster Assembly fell busily to work to revise the Articles, to draw up a Directory for public worship and for ordination, to compile cate-

Growing im-  
portance of  
the Inde-  
pendents

The Direc-  
tory imposed  
by law

chisms and a confession of faith. In January 1645 the Directory for public worship received the sanction of Parliament, and was taken down to Uxbridge to form the basis of the negotiations on ecclesiastical matters there with the King. In August of the same year its use was enjoined all over England under pain of a fine, and the use of the Prayer Book was made penal. The English Presbyterians, in fact, with the powerful aid of the Scottish commissioners, were straining every nerve to obtain the establishment of their disciplinary system, while the alliance with Scotland was still a condition of victory, before Cromwell and his soldiers were in a position to dictate obedience.

It is amusing to watch the increasing anxiety of Baillie as the days pass and nothing is done. He chafes at the perpetual delays, he longs for the nearer approach of the Scottish army. His blood boils at the thought that perhaps after all the prize may slip from his hands, and the Independents and Erastians gain the day. 'I cannot tell you what to say of the Assemblie—We are almost desperate to see anything concluded for a long time—Their way is woefully tedious—The Independents have so managed their affairs that of the officers and sojourns in Manchester's armie, certainlie also in the Generall's, and as I hear in Waller's likewise, more than two parts are for them, and these of the farr most resolute and confident men for the Parliament party—judge ye if we had not need of our friends' help. All of them [*i.e.* the Dissenters] were ever willing to admit Elders in a prudentiall way—We trust to carie at last their divyne and scriptural institution. This is a point

Disputes in  
the Assem-  
bly and  
Parliament  
over the  
establish-  
ment of  
Presbyte-  
rianism



of high consequence; and upon no other we expect so great difficulty except alone on Independencie, where-with we purpose not to meddle in haste till it please God to advance our armie, which we expect will much assist our arguments.' <sup>1</sup>

And again, after another year had elapsed in endless discussion: 'We are preparing for the catechism; but we think all is for little purpose till the government is set up. The Assemblie has delivered their full sense of all its parts to the Parliament half a year ago. The Independent parties, albeit their number in the Parliament be very small, yet being prime men, active and diligent, and making it their great work to retard all till they be first secured of a toleration for their separate congregations; and the body of the lawyers, who are another strong partie in the House, believing all Church government to be part of the civill and Parliamentary power, which nature and Scripture had placed in them, and to be derived from them to the ministers only so far as they think expedient; a third partie of worldlie profane men, who are extremely affrighted to come under the yoke of ecclesiastic discipline: these three kinds, making up two parts at least of the Parliament, there is no hopes that ever they will settle the Government according to our mind, if they were left to themselves. Had our army been bot one 15,000 men in England our advyce would have been followed quickly in all things.'—'The Independents have the least zeale to the truth of God of any men we know. Blasphemous heresies are now spread here more than ever in any part of the world; yet they are not only silent, bot are

<sup>1</sup> Baillie, ii. 111-164, 170, 336.

patrons and pleaders for libertie almost to them all. What the Lord will make the issue a little time will now declare. We had great need of your prayers—we were never more full of weightie business and perplexed solicitude of mynd.’<sup>1</sup>

The truth was that outside of the City and of the Assembly there were few who desired to see erected all over England the presbyteries and synods in which Baillie considered true religion alone could be found. Least of all was Parliament going to surrender to the ministers the power over Church government which it had wrested from the hands of Laud. If it had to choose between the two, it would prefer the licence of Independency to the unyielding yoke of Presbyterianism, but for the present it hoped to be able to steer a middle course between the two—to satisfy the Scotch by adopting Presbyterian forms, but retaining the discipline in its own hands, to exercise it for the suppression of fanatics without interfering with the sober Independents.

Accordingly, in April 1645, an ordinance was passed to prevent any one from preaching unless he had been ordained by one of the Reformed Churches, or had been permitted to preach by a committee of Parliament appointed for the purpose; and it was especially ordered that this regulation should be communicated to the General and to the Lord Mayor, in order that condign punishment should be inflicted upon offenders. In the autumn of the same year Parliament took upon itself the still more delicate duty of deciding the grounds upon which

Attitude of  
the Parlia-  
ment to  
ecclesi-  
astical  
questions

It regulates  
Church  
government  
on its own  
authority

<sup>1</sup> Baillie, ii. 361.

excommunication might be pronounced by the presbyteries, and appointed a standing committee from its own body to hear appeals in such cases. In June 1646 a complete scheme of Church government by presbyters, presbyteries, and synods passed the two Houses and was ordered to be enforced, but although, from that time until the Restoration, Presbyterianism was the legal form of Church government in England, it was never carried out except in London and Lancashire. On the passing of this scheme of government the work of the Westminster Assembly was over. It had laboured hard and had met with many difficulties. It had produced a confession of faith, two catechisms, a directory of public worship, a form of ordination of ministers, and a scheme of Church government. All of these had been conceived in the interests of the Presbyterians, and were designed to bring England into a substantial identity with Scotland in the matter of religion. They had, nevertheless, carefully preserved the supremacy of Parliament over all ecclesiastical questions, whether of faith or of discipline, and thus permitted a greater amount of freedom than was possible under the rigid clericalism of the Scotch system.

Events, however, marched too quickly for either Assembly or Parliament. The ink was scarcely dry on the paper on which the Presbyterian scheme of government was written when the quarrel between the Parliament and the army, which had, ever since the passing of the Self-denying Ordinance, only been kept under by the common opposition to the common enemy, flamed out fiercely. The occupation of London by the army in

The establishment of Presbyterianism rendered nugatory by the quarrel between Parliament and the army

August 1647, the exclusion from Parliament of the Presbyterian leaders which was the result of the occupation, the complete victory of Fairfax and Cromwell over the united Royalist and Scottish forces in the second Civil War in 1648, laid England at the feet of the army, and the triumph of the army was the death-blow of Presbyterianism in England.

While Presbyterians and Independents were fighting for the mastery, the Church was beginning to learn

The position  
of the  
Church,  
1641-49

the first lessons of suffering. Persecution, which had so long been her servant, was now her master. For a short time after the

downfall of Laud, Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, thought that he had diplomatic skill enough to steer the bark

Williams'  
attempt to  
lead

of the Church through the shoals. He was popular for the moment, because he alone among the Bishops had withstood the court in the days of prerogative government, and had suffered accordingly at the hands of the Star Chamber. His religious opinions were of a sufficiently elastic character to enable him to go far in the direction of compromise. On all questions of ceremonial and discipline he preferred the Puritan interpretation. In particular he flattered himself that he had a scheme of his own, which would effectually settle the dispute about the position of the Altars.

His whole conduct is that of a clever worldly man, who has just that kind of cleverness which continually overreaches itself, because it takes for granted that every one else is a clever worldly man too. By ordering that the Altars should ordinarily stand at the east end of the chancel, and be brought

Estimate of  
his conduct

down to the body of the church whenever there was a celebration of the Holy Communion, Williams thought that he had carried out the exact terms of the rubric in a way which would satisfy everybody. He forgot that to the Puritan, who saw the Altar on most Sundays of the year, standing at a distance from the congregation, in the place of honour by itself, the spirit of sacerdotalism with all its attendant superstition would seem to be ever present; while to the Churchman, who was called upon to take part in the holiest rite of the Church at a makeshift Altar in the middle of the building, every guarantee for order and reverence would seem to have been wantonly removed. In the same way, when called upon to advise the King whether he could in conscience assent to the bill of attainder against Strafford, Williams again showed a strange inappreciation of the deeper side of human nature. His advice was such as we might expect to find proceeding from a scientific casuist, who despises the rough and ready judgments of the world upon moral questions. Anxious to find some ground upon which to justify the execution of Strafford, which he felt was necessary to the success of his policy of reconciliation, he advised the King that he had, as king, a double conscience, public and private, and therefore might conscientiously do as a king what he knew as a man to be wrong. Such a doctrine, which might have something to be said for it in the nineteenth century, when the sovereign is merely the officer of the law, and exercises no independent judgment upon legislation, was not likely to commend itself to the blunt honesty of Englishmen of the seventeenth century, who were accustomed to regard

the king as the centre and source of all that was done in his name.

The policy of trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds is one which can never be followed very long with success; and so Williams found to his cost before the end of the year 1641. The Puritan majority in Parliament were determined on a much greater change in ecclesiastical government than the substitution of Williams for Laud. His popularity soon began to wane. He was elected chairman of the committee of the House of Lords upon innovations in religion in March 1641. By the summer he had in concert with Ussher produced a scheme for effecting Church reform by a limitation of Episcopacy, which represented his policy of compromise, but it never got further than the House of Lords. His acceptance of the Archbishopric of York in October 1641 brought upon himself the whole force of the Puritan hatred. The mob insulted him as he went to the Parliament House in November, and then at any rate, if not before, he gave up all hopes of guiding public opinion. He lent himself to be the mouthpiece of the more violent of the court party, withdrew from Parliament with eleven other Bishops, presented together with them a protest to the effect that the Parliament was no longer free, and suffered the penalty of his folly by being committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason.

So ended the attempt to bring the Church and the Puritans into harmony on the basis of a vague and easy-going Episcopal government, administered in a conciliatory manner by politic statesmen. The times required treatment much

Ejection of  
the Laudian  
and Royalist  
clergy

more drastic than this; and while the House of Lords were playing with Williams the House of Commons was acting. As early as December 1640 a committee had been appointed to remove scandalous ministers, which was afterwards divided into four sub-committees. By these bodies a large number of the Clergy were ejected from their benefices even before the war broke out, on the ground either of alleged immoral life, or more often of some ceremonial practice—such as bowing at the name of Jesus—authorised by the Church but objected to by the Puritans. After the Civil War began the work was taken up more thoroughly. Adherence to the King naturally became a cause for immediate ejection, and the vacancies thus caused by the removal of the *malignant* Clergy were filled by a committee appointed for the purpose in 1642, called the Committee of plundered Ministers, whose special duty it was to provide for the Puritan ministers who were being dispossessed by the King's forces.

In April 1643 an ordinance was passed for the sequestering of delinquents' estates, and local committees were appointed in all parts of the country under the obedience of the Parliament to carry it into effect. It was through the action of these local committees that the bulk of the Clergy suffered. After September 1643 the Covenant was usually offered to each incumbent as a test, and if he refused to subscribe he was treated as a delinquent, ejected from his benefice, and deprived of his goods. It has been calculated, probably with some exaggeration, that two thousand Clergy were sequestered in this way in England and Wales. Whatever the exact number may have been, it was un-

Sequestration of their estates

doubtedly very large, for the work was pushed on with unrelenting zeal and considerable acrimony. Informers were invited to give evidence against the Clergy, and the smallest pretexts were taken hold of to effect the desired change. It is not easy to say how the places thus rendered vacant were filled. The Assembly of Divines, as we have seen, drew up careful instructions about the qualifications of candidates for the ministry, and Parliament in 1645 issued an ordinance imposing ordination of some kind as a necessary preliminary of ministerial work. The fact, however, that such an ordinance was necessary renders it likely that there must have been a good many preachers, if not parish ministers, who had received no ordination at all, and had merely appointed themselves to their office. Probably, in the confusion consequent upon the war, and upon the wholesale ejection of the Clergy, many benefices were seized upon in a very irregular manner, and held without any legal title at all.

All that was done by the Committees was done by the authority of Parliament, and may therefore be said to have had the sanction of the law, as far as there could be any law in those troubled days. The soldiers of Essex and of Fairfax naturally enough did not seek for further authority than the power which the fortune of war placed in their hands. Wherever the rival armies went, churches and cathedrals were used, as convenience required, as barracks, or stables, or fortresses, and officers were not scrupulous in inquiring what damage had been committed.

At Lichfield, in 1643, the cathedral formed the centre of the Royalist defences, and from the top of the

Wrecking of  
cathedrals  
by the  
soldiers



building came the stone that killed Lord Brooke. At Canterbury the soldiers and the mob tore down the carved stonework, rifled the tombs, overthrew the Altar, and wrecked the organ. At Peterborough, Cromwell's soldiers 'did miserably havoc the cathedral.'

At Ely the Church services went on uninterruptedly until the beginning of 1644, when Cromwell, who was Governor of Ely at the time, peremptorily ordered that they should stop. No attention was paid to the letter, and Cromwell with some soldiers at his back appeared at the door during service-time, and marching with his hat on up into the choir repeated the order, 'I am a man under authority, I am commanded to dismiss this assembly.' Then, seeing some hesitation, in a more masterful tone, 'Leave off your fooling, sir, and come down;' and the choir at Ely was silent until the Restoration.

Norwich fared far worse than Ely. Perhaps the recollections of Wren made the Puritan revenge all the more furious. Hall, the respected and conciliatory Bishop of Exeter, who had just been appointed to the see of Norwich, thus describes the scene:—'It is no other than tragical to relate the carriage of that furious sacrilege, whereof our eyes and ears were the sad witnesses. Lord, what work was here! What clattering of glasses! What beating down of walls! What tearing up of monuments! What pulling down of seats! What wresting out of irons and brass from the windows and graves! What defacing of arms! What demolishing of curious stonework that had not any representation in the world, but

only of the cost of the founder and skill of the mason! What tooting and piping upon the destroyed organ pipes! And what a hideous triumph on the market day before all the country when, in a kind of sacrilegious and profane procession, all the organ pipes, vestments, both copes and surplices, together with the leaden cross which had been newly sawn down from over the Green Yard pulpit, and the service books and the singing books that could be had, were carried to the fire in the public market-place! Neither was it any news upon the Guild day to have the cathedral now open on all sides, to be filled with musketeers waiting for the mayor's return, drinking and tobacconing as freely as if it had turned alehouse!'

But the bigotry of the soldiers and of the Puritan mobs was not satisfied with the wrecking of cathedrals and the destruction of works of art. Ever since November 1640 Laud had been in custody awaiting his trial, but no one except his enemy Prynne seemed anxious to hasten on the matter. A committee was appointed to draw up articles of impeachment, his papers were seized, even his book of private devotions was taken away, his Archbishopric was sequestered; but it was not till November 1643, after he had been in prison nearly three years, that he was brought to trial—a date which suggests the supposition that it was thought that his punishment would be gratifying to the Scots.

The articles charged were ludicrously insufficient to support an accusation of high treason. Following the analogy of Strafford's case, the Commons sought to prove a conspiracy to overthrow

The trial of  
Laud

Nature of  
the charge  
against him

the fundamental laws of England, and thus to strike at the very foundation of the constitution by a number of high-handed acts, each comparatively innocuous. But in the case of Laud they were deprived of any evidence, like that of Vane at the trial of Strafford, of an intention to employ force against the Parliament, and had to rely instead upon evidence of a design to bring in Popery and subvert the national religion. To prove this the whole life and conduct of the Archbishop was brought under review. The enforcement of the rubrics, the removal of the Altars, the ceremonies used at the consecration of St. Catherine Cree, the silencing of Puritan ministers, the patronage extended to Montague, Sibthorpe, Mainwaring, and Cosin, the offer received by him of a cardinal's hat, the canons of 1640, and the unlucky *et cætera* oath, the introduction of the Prayer Book into Scotland, even the cushions on the Altar of his Chapel at Lambeth, were all pressed into the service, to prove the charge on the broad general ground that whatever was not Puritan was Popish. Laud's counsel had no difficulty in showing that by no manner of ingenuity could any one of these things be brought under the statute of Edward III. which regulated the law of treason; and that if not one of them was treasonable by itself, it was impossible that the whole of them could be treasonable in the aggregate. The impeachment clearly failed; even the attenuated House of Lords could not convict upon such evidence as that.

The Commons accordingly had recourse to the shorter and safer method of attainder. On October 11, 1644, a year after the trial had begun in earnest, Laud's counsel addressed to the Lords their

His attain-  
der and  
death

final argument on the impeachment. On November 1 an ordinance for his attainder was introduced into the Commons, and on the 16th was passed by them and sent up to the Lords. Some delay took place before the fourteen Lords who represented the Peers at Westminster could bring themselves to consent to what was so obviously a judicial murder. At length, on January 4, 1645, their scruples were overcome, and on the 10th the Act was carried into effect.

So died the great archbishop. To him the final sentence must have come with a feeling of relief, as he looked hopefully forward to gaining at last the rest which for seventy-one years of a singularly troubled life had been denied him. During that time he had experienced the extremity both of fortune and of failure, and, as is so often the case, his character shone out the brighter as the storm of persecution thickened. Historians have loved to dwell on the darker traits of his character, have remembered his harshness and his irritability, have denounced his want of sympathy as bigotry, have jeered at his friendship for Charles and for Buckingham as the sycophancy of a courtier prelate. They have left out of sight the well-stored intellect which disputed with Fisher, the wide philosophical mind which convinced Hales and befriended Chillingworth, the love of knowledge which brought the learning of the East to the lecture-rooms and libraries of Oxford, the generous self-denial which repaired St. Paul's Cathedral and rebuilt St. John's College.

The well-known features which look out to us from the canvas of Vandyke, as well as the records of his

inner life spread open to our gaze in his diary, reveal a very different person from the harsh, domineering prelate history has loved to paint. Inwardly sensitive and outwardly cold, prim in appearance and unsympathetic, almost stern in manner, possessed with the determination to do his duty, perfectly regardless of opinion, absolutely single-minded before God and man, a man who could make, and did make, great mistakes, but a man who never knowingly chose the lower part—such was Laud. It is not without its lessons that the Church of England should have produced since the Reformation a primate who was willing to go to the scaffold for his opinions.

That lesson was before four years had passed to be taught in a still more striking manner by a still more august sufferer. Charles, ever since his surrender to the Scotch, had been trying, with that feeble cunning, born partly of irresolution and partly of self-sufficiency, which he had ever at his command, to steer his course between the Parliament and the army, so as to make himself necessary to both without pledging himself to either. The result was what might have been expected. Each party, disgusted in turn at his duplicity and convinced of his insincerity, made up their minds to do without him, and he was surrendered as a sop to the rank and file of the army, who were determined to require at his hands all the blood which had been shed in the war.

Yet throughout the tedious negotiations which passed between the King and his captors, in spite of the duplicity which marked his political conduct, there runs from first to last a vein of sincerity on one point which does much to

Conduct of  
Charles after  
the war

His stead-  
fastness  
with regard  
to the  
Church

relieve his character from the stain of bad faith which rests upon it. If a martyr in no other sense, he was certainly a martyr in this sense, that almost up to the very last he might have saved his life and preserved something of his dignity if he would have consented to the abolition of the Church, and this he steadily refused to do. That was the grain of incense which he was called upon to throw on the Puritan altar. At Newcastle, just after his surrender to the Scots, all the most powerful influences which could affect such a man in that position were brought to bear upon him. The French ambassador counselled him to surrender the point, the commissioners from the Parliament urged it, the Scottish deputies went on their knees to him to give way, the Queen wrote from France imploring him to accept the terms; yet he was proof against all solicitations or threats. 'I cannot plead in a bad cause,' he is reported once to have said of himself, 'nor yield in a good one.' Certainly he proved himself a good prophet as far as the latter part of the sentence went. But though he might have saved his life by consenting to the abolition of the Church, it was not his determination to preserve the Church that really brought about his death.

The leaders of the army, fully recognising his position, offered him toleration for the Church in the ultimatum they put before him in 1647. He refused the ultimatum—not on that ground, but because he thought at the moment that he could get better terms on most points from the Parliament, though probably worse ones on the Church question. He was mistaken, and had thrown away his last chance.

The army  
resolve upon  
his death

The army leaders in despair determined to have no more dealings with him. Daily they began to incline more and more to the policy of the Adjutors and the more fanatical of the Independents. The alliance of the King with the Scots, and the consequent revival of the war in 1648, they looked upon as a wilful plunging of the nation again into trouble and disorder. The speedy suppression of their enemies was the witness of God in their favour, and called upon them to execute His vengeance upon the man of blood. So the Parliament was overawed by force, the high court of justice formed, the mock trial held, the sentence given; and on the memorable 30th of January 1649, monarchy went forth from the window at Whitehall on the path the Church had trod a few years before, out into the darkness of exile and of suffering.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### RELIGIOUS ANARCHY.

FROM the death of Charles to the Restoration religious anarchy prevailed in England. The establishment of the Presbyterian form of Church government in 1645 had been the necessary result of the political alliance of the Parliament with the Scotch. It had never commended itself to the religious instincts of Englishmen. It was equally disliked by the religious fanatic, by the worldly

Weakness of  
English  
Presby-  
terianism

man of pleasure, and by the Erastian lawyer. Itself but an exotic, transplanted from Scotland into England, the emblem of the alliance between the two nations, it ought logically to have been plucked up by the roots when that alliance came to an end in 1648. It was saved by its weakness. Had it been more successful, undoubtedly it would never have survived the triumph of the Independents. As it was, it was not worth their while to interfere with a system under the cover of which they could get all that they wanted.

In the autumn of 1645 the instinct of self-preservation had led them even to negotiate with the King for a combination of forces against the Presbyterians; but by the end of 1648 they had learned their own strength, and could afford to be generous. Besides, there was much in the work of the Westminster Assembly which they could readily accept. The Westminster Confession of Faith contained a statement of Calvinistic doctrine to which they had little objection to make. The two Catechisms, though more argumentative, and therefore offering a wider field for controversy, had been subjected to a thorough sifting by their own divines before they had received the sanction of Parliament. The Directory was as well adapted to the Independent as to the Presbyterian form of worship. The question which really divided the two Puritan parties was one of Church government, not of faith or of worship. On the one side, Presbyterian discipline, on the other side, liberty for tender consciences, were the opposing cries. All that the Independents cared for was to obtain an ecclesiastical administration which would permit them

Presby-  
terian forms  
no hin-  
drance to  
Independ-  
ency



to worship God in their own way without interference. A state of affairs in which the Government never interfered was one which suited them exactly; and they did not care to inquire whether the legal government of religion was by presbyteries or not, as long as the presbyteries, if they existed, did not attempt to make their existence felt.

But such a state of affairs was, in fact, nothing less than anarchy. For five years after the death of the King all ecclesiastical discipline in England was in suspension. From time to time, when something exceptional happened, Parliament stepped in and decided the particular case. When movements like those of the Levellers, which were partly religious and partly political, occurred, the army interfered promptly and rigorously in the interests of civil order. In ordinary matters all government was in abeyance. There was no authority to decide on the qualifications of candidates for the ministry, or on the titles by which men held benefices. There was no power to enforce a common order of worship, much less to suggest an agreement in faith. Each congregation took the law into its own hands, and every man did what was right in his own eyes.

It is not to be wondered at that in times like these, when the bonds of coercive discipline were suddenly relaxed, men's minds should be thrown off the balance under the influence of strong religious and political excitement. The wildest fanaticism displayed itself all over the country. In some places poor wretches persuaded themselves they were witches, and concocted elaborate stories of the visits of the evil one

Total abeyance of all discipline

Outbreak of fanaticism

to their doors. At St. George's Hill, in Surrey, a number of men went out and 'dug the ground and planted roots and beans, saying that God was now going to bring His people out of the slavery' under which they had lived since William the Conqueror—'they were bidden to dig and plough the earth and receive the fruits thereof, for God had promised to make the barren land fruitful.' In 1650, four Somersetshire men sold all their property and embarked at London for Palestine, believing they had a call from God to preach the gospel in Galilee. In some quarters a spirit of Antinomianism displayed itself, and men claimed to be above the ordinary rules of the moral law. At the door of the Parliament House a Quaker suddenly fell to slashing at all near him, saying he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to kill every man there. As, however, the restraint of religious rule and habit became feebler and feebler, the necessity of restraint of some sort became more and more apparent, and the State stepped in to fill the gap caused by the enforced abdication of the Church.

Under the Commonwealth the State became the guardian and the censor of public and private morals, as well as the protector of society against the State-enforcement of morality immoral. In 1647 an ordinance passed both Houses, totally prohibiting all stage plays as dangerous to the public morals, and ordering players to be proceeded against as vagabonds. In July 1650 an Act was passed 'for preventing and suppressing the detestable sin of profane cursing and swearing,' by levying fines upon oaths according to a scale laid down in the Act, from which it appears that the oath of a Peer was considered to be no less than nine times as valuable as that

of an ordinary person. In the same year sins of impurity and the profanation of the Sabbath were made criminal offences, and the publishing of books and pamphlets was put under careful State supervision. In the army the strictest discipline was uniformly enforced, and all offences against morals, such as drunkenness or unchastity, rigorously punished. By these provisions an attempt was made by Parliament to undertake the inquisitorial work which was intended to be done by the presbyteries; but the more zealous of the strict upholders of morality even among the Independents were by no means satisfied with the results attained, and the army in particular, perhaps on account of the severity of its own discipline, was continually petitioning for stronger measures.

The problem which the Parliament undertook to solve on the death of Charles I. was indeed one which would have taxed its powers to the utmost in the first days of its vigorous youth, when it presented to its opponents a compact and united phalanx marshalled under men like Pym and Hampden. It was far beyond the capacities of the disunited and discredited remnant of an assembly which, though thinned by the civil wars, torn by dissension, and flouted by the army, still, under the leadership of Marten and Vane, arrogated to itself the name and dressed itself in the robes of the Long Parliament. The appearance, the gait, even the roar of the lion were still there, but under that fierce exterior was the heart of the jackass. To conquer Ireland for the Puritan Commonwealth, to crush the Scotch Presbyterians and their covenanted King, to struggle

The difficulties of the Parliament, 1640-53

for the supremacy of the sea with the pushing Dutch republic, were objects of policy more than sufficient to absorb all the energies of the Council of State and the Parliament. But behind the Council of State and the Parliament ever loomed the ominous figure of the general whose skill was enabling them to win the victory, and by whose permission they still continued to sit, and no one knew how soon the day would come when he would have no further need of them.

There was accordingly no serious attempt made by the Long Parliament after 1649 to deal with the religious difficulties which surrounded it, but the changes which were made in the law were in the direction of Independency. An oath called the Engagement, 'to be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England as it is now established, without a King or House of Lords,' was substituted for the Presbyterian Covenant of 1644, and was even subscribed by many Royalists, on the ground that it merely recognised a *de facto* government. In the same year provision was made for sending preachers and schoolmasters into Wales, which was especially the work of the Independents in the House, and was urged by Cromwell himself against all the efforts of the Presbyterian party. It must have been some satisfaction to him to learn from the letters received two years later by the Parliament that the experiment had so far succeeded that there were by that time 150 good preachers in Wales, most of whom preached three or four times a week. A few days before their dissolution in April 1653, Parliament agreed to nominate a committee to 'examine and approve all such persons as shall

The Engagement substituted for the Covenant

be called to preach the Gospel'—an attempt, no doubt, to propitiate Cromwell by adopting his policy of a committee of triers; but beyond these fitful efforts there was little or nothing done to supply the want of government, which was rapidly degenerating into mere licence.

Appoint-  
ment of a  
committee  
of examiners

It was this abdication of the functions of government by the Parliament more than anything else that deter-  
mined Cromwell to get rid of it in April 1653.

Expulsion of  
the Parlia-  
ment by  
Cromwell,  
1653

'They were come to an utter inability of working reformation,' he says, in justifying the dissolution to the Little Parliament a few weeks later. 'We know that many months together were not enough for the settling of one word. The government of the nation being in such condition as we saw, we desired they would devolve the trust over to some well-affected men, such as had an interest in the nation and were known to be of good affection to the Commonwealth.'

The Little Parliament, which met in July 1653, was the embodiment of these hopes, and certainly could not be accused of want of vigour. It was chiefly an Independent body, and included many of the fanatics. Chosen by Cromwell to assist him in the work of 'Healing and Settling,' it made confusion worse confounded. One of its first actions was to render any religious ceremony unnecessary for the validity of marriages. It rejected, only by the narrow majority of two, a proposal to give the parishioners the right of electing their minister. It discussed at great length the desirability of abolishing the payment of tithes, and a considerable minority of the House showed themselves prepared to vote for the abolition, in spite of the

The Little  
Parliament

well-known opinions of the general. Such measures as these were very far from the healing and settling which was uppermost in the mind of Cromwell. In December, doubtless at his instigation, the members surrendered their power back to him who had given it them. Before another Parliament met, Cromwell, taught by experience, had traced for himself in firm lines the policy which he had determined to adopt, and which he called upon his Parliament to advance.

From December 1653 to September 1658 Cromwell was the governor of England in a sense far more absolute than had been either Charles I. or Elizabeth, and the arbiter of religion in England far more autocratic and irresponsible than had been either Whitgift or Laud. During that time he twice voluntarily accepted the limitation upon his power of a written constitution, and in both those constitutions the religious ideal at which he aimed is set forth in very similar words. In the Instrument of Government, under which he first exercised the office of Protector, this ideal was laid down very clearly. 'That the Christian religion contained in the Scriptures be held forth and recommended as the public profession of these nations ; and that as soon as may be a provision less subject to scruple and contention, and more certain than the present, be made for the encouragement and maintenance of able and painful teachers for instructing the people, and for discovery and confutation of error, heresy, and whatever is contrary to sound doctrine ; and that until such provision is made the present maintenance shall not be taken away or impeached.

' That to the public profession held forth none shall

be compelled by penalties or otherwise, but that endeavours be used to win them by sound doctrine and the example of a good conversation.

‘That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ (though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, or discipline publicly held forth) shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in the profession of the faith and the exercise of their religion, so that they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others and the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts: provided that this liberty be not extended to Popery or Prelacy, nor to such as under the profession of Christ hold forth and practise licentiousness.’

In the Humble Petition and Advice, by which the Protectorate was intended to be made permanent and hereditary in the year 1657, these provisions were in substance reaffirmed, with the caution ‘that such as did not agree in matters of faith with the public profession thereof should not be capable of receiving the public maintenance appointed for the ministry;’ and ‘that nothing in the Act should be construed as in any way repealing the Act for disabling all persons in holy orders to exercise any temporal jurisdiction or authority.’

In this constitution Independency is acknowledged as the religion of England. There is no recognition of any church, there is no enforcement of any system of discipline or worship. The whole idea of a religious society, the root idea of a church, is entirely put on one side. It is true that a public profession which is to contain a confession of faith, is contemplated by the Humble Petition and Advice; but it

His belief  
in Independ-  
ency

is clear that it is to be couched in the most general terms, and is intended more as a guide to perfection than as a standard of orthodoxy. As a matter of fact the confession never saw the light. The attitude of the Government is to be negative rather than positive. Its duty is no longer to teach positive truth, much less to enforce it. To ward off the most dangerous forms of error is the utmost that can be permitted with due regard to the rights of individual consciences.

Toleration from all who will abstain from interference with the civil government, unless they are either the slaves of Popish or Episcopal superstition, or are the acknowledged enemies of the moral law, is loudly proclaimed. It was but a limited toleration, yet a toleration which was far in advance of any previous policy of the kind, because it proceeded, as far as it went, on the true principle of toleration, *i.e.* that the State, as such, has nothing to do with a man's religious opinions, except so far as they may issue in political action. The toleration of Cromwell's government was not the mere relieving of certain classes of the community from legal disabilities, such as was the toleration of the Roman Catholics by James I. and James II., and that of some Nonconformists by the Toleration Act of 1689. It was the distinct assertion that all good citizens have a right to decide their own religious affairs for themselves; in Independent phrase it was a public acknowledgment of 'liberty for tender consciences,' which had been the watchword of the Independents in their struggle with the Presbyterians ever since 1644. True, it was limited by the exclusion of Papists, Episcopalians, and the licentious, but that

His theory  
of toleration



was because they could never become good citizens. In Cromwell's eyes it was as impossible for an Episcopalian, as it is now to a number of minds for a professed atheist, to be a good citizen. He recognised that the Episcopalian had no place in the Puritan Commonwealth, just as Laud recognised that the Puritan had no place in his system of hierarchical and prerogative government. To extend toleration to the Prelatist would be for the State to put a dagger into its enemy's hand, and to abdicate its primary function of protector of society.

But Cromwell was not content with merely announcing this policy of toleration for all peaceable and well-conducted Protestants. He set to work to make it a reality by reforming the Protestant and getting rid of the Episcopal clergy. By an ordinance issued in March 1654 a committee was formed called the Committee of Triers, to inquire into the qualifications of every one who was presented as a candidate for ecclesiastical preferment. No presentee was entitled to enter upon his benefice until he had received the certificate of the committee, but at least nine members of the committee must be present if the certificate was refused. This body, unlike its predecessor which had been appointed by the Westminster Assembly, had no elaborate code of instructions or formularies of faith by which to guide its actions. Subject to occasional interference on the part of the Protector and his council, it was absolute in the authority it wielded, and irresponsible in its exercise of it.

In the autumn of the same year another ordinance called into being the no less famous Committees of

Scandalous Ministers. To them was intrusted the business of making the vacancies which the Triers were to fill. In each county a sub-committee was formed, which had the power of summoning every incumbent to appear before it, and satisfy it of his learning, good conduct, and general sufficiency. Among the scandals particularly enumerated as proper causes of ejection, besides moral offences such as drunkenness, profanity, gambling, and the like, came also the using of the Book of Common Prayer, scoffing at those of strict profession, and the encouragement of morris-dances or stage plays. These committees, like the Triers, were practically irresponsible in their action; and as the composition of the sub-committees varied very much in the different counties, the decisions given by them were often dictated by bigotry and party-spirit. The case of Dr. Edmund Pocke, the most learned of the Oriental scholars of his day, who was condemned by the Berkshire committee for insufficiency, is by no means an isolated one. His real offence was that he had used part of the Prayer Book in the public service.

By the action of these committees much undoubtedly was done to reform the irregularities which had occurred in the times of past confusion, and to introduce some sort of order into the religious anarchy which prevailed. No longer under the Protector's government would it be necessary, as in 1652, to take measures for preventing the stealing of lead from St. Paul's Cathedral. No committee of the Commons was likely again seriously to discuss 'What cathedrals are fit to stand, and what to be pulled down?' yet anything like a solution of the

The Committees of Scandalous Ministers

Failure of Cromwell to bring about the settlement of the nation

religious difficulty was as far off as ever. Cromwell had taken as his motto the words 'Healing and Settling.' He had dismissed the Long Parliament, because 'they were come to an utter inability of working reformation.' He had got rid of the Little Parliament, because there was 'nothing in the hearts and minds of men but overturn, overturn, overturn.' He dissolved the first Protectorate Parliament, because 'instead of peace and settlement, instead of mercy and truth being brought together and righteousness and peace kissing each other, dissettlement and division, discontent and dissatisfaction have been more multiplied within these five months than in some years before.' He summoned the second Protectorate Parliament, in order that 'all things may be done that ought to be done towards security and reformation.' He dissolved the same Parliament, because of their 'not assenting to what might prove the settlement of the nation.' No more than Charles would he endure a Parliament of control; no more than Charles was he likely to find a Parliament content merely to counsel.

And if Englishmen were not going to tolerate for long the establishment of military power, veiled under civil forms, in the hands of Cromwell; still less were they likely to endure the permanence of religious caprice, veiled under Independent forms, in the hands of irresponsible committees. Whatever the merit of the committees may have been, they certainly were very far from healing and settling. Their chief work was to get rid of those of the Episcopalian Clergy who still retained their benefices, and to take care that no Episcopal Clergy managed to creep back after they had once been ejected.

Many were the shifts to which the Episcopalians were put in order not to be divided from their flocks.

Persecution of the clergy Sometimes they were appointed by the county gentry to be tutors to their sons, and so retained their right to live in their old parishes. Sometimes they would try as schoolmasters to keep together the boys they once had instructed as Clergy. But in 1655, after the Royalist conspiracy in the west, an edict was issued by the Protector forbidding any ejected or sequestered minister from keeping a school, acting as tutor, or performing any rite of the Church, or using the Book of Common Prayer, and the major-generals then in power were ordered to see it duly enforced. This, in fact, amounted to a complete proscription of the Church. The dispossessed Clergy were reduced in many cases to absolute want. Those that had hitherto conformed to the Government now joined the ranks of their brethren and of the Presbyterians, in looking to a restoration of the monarchy as the only chance of putting an end to anarchy.

Day by day the fact impressed itself clearer and clearer on the mind of the nation, and especially of

Growth of a desire for a Restoration in the interests of order 1658 that part of the nation which had anything to lose, that the only choice now left was one between anarchy or a Restoration. As long as Cromwell lived, men felt that the maintenance of civil order was at any rate safe in his hands; but after his death who could say the same of Richard or of Lambert? Parliament was too weak, the army too strong and too self-seeking, to be safely intrusted with the liberties and the property of Englishmen. Yet for two years it was uncertain how the Restoration

would be brought about. It was certain that it would be the work of the party of order, not of the party merely of the King; but in the party of order were found many who had taken different sides in the earlier struggles—Hollis, the Presbyterian, who had carried the impeachment of Laud to the Peers, Manchester, the general of the Eastern Association Army, who had visited and reformed the University of Cambridge in 1643, Monk, the Cromwellian, who had kept Scotland so quiet under the Protector, were all gathered under the ægis of the party of order. What guarantee was there that the Church would come back with the monarchy if these were the friends of monarchy? Monk was sharp-sighted enough to see that to try and exact terms from the returning King was to bind Samson with green withes. The Church and the Crown had been united together in their fall, they had suffered together in their exile, it was idle to suppose that they could be dissevered in their triumph. The day that saw Charles II. crowned King of all England saw Juxon, as Primate of all England, officiate at the coronation.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE RESTORATION.

THE Restoration was the work of the whole nation, not of a party. It was the victory of peace, not of loyalty.

Character of the Restoration Men, wearied with confusion, exhausted by strife, frightened by military despotism, sickened by anarchy, turned to the throne and to the

Church, because in them they saw, not only a protection against disorder, but also a guarantee for law. They were time-honoured institutions, which had grown with the growth of England, had incorporated themselves into the tissue of the national life, looked to the law for protection, appealed to the law for assistance, were recognised, and therefore were limited, by the law in the exercise of their authority. Englishmen had had enough of a liberty which depended entirely upon the caprice of the Government of the day. They preferred the known procedure of the Bishops' Court and the canon law to the irresponsible decisions of a committee. They preferred the authoritative proclamations of a King in council to the irresponsible edict of a major-general. With the monarchy and with the Church returned the sense of security and the duty of responsibility.

But the task put before the King and his advisers in Church and State was all the harder on that very account. If Charles had owed his crown to a Difficulties of the King Royalist victory, it would have been comparatively easy to have secured the ascendancy of his own supporters without undue pressure upon his opponents. When he owed it to a combination of all parties, except the compromised and the fanatics, how was it possible to restore the dispossessed Cavalier to his land, without disturbing the Cromwellian who had bought it? How was it possible to recognise the title of the Cromwellian without behaving unjustly, let alone ungenerously, to the man who had sacrificed his all for the King?

The question of the Church was even more difficult

than that of the land. The absence of any definite government of religion, the fitful and partial character of the persecution to which the Episcopal Clergy had been subjected, made the problem all the harder. Nearly every religious division in the country was represented among the incumbents of parishes.

The majority of the Episcopal Clergy had been ejected either by the committees appointed by the Long  
 The ejected  
 Episco-  
 palians Parliament in 1640 and 1642, or by the  
 Parliamentarian armies in the civil war, or by the Committee of Scandalous Ministers appointed by Cromwell. But it appears that some had been able to continue their ministrations unmolested until the appearance of Cromwell's proclamation of 1655. We learn from Evelyn's Diary that even in London Dr. Wild preached openly and celebrated the Holy Communion at St. Peter's, Paul's Wharf, in December 1655. More usually the services were held in private rooms, and often the words were recited from memory, in order to avoid the actual user of the prescribed Prayer Book. Some of the Bishops went abroad with the King to France, and formed part of the congregation which met at the Ambassadors' Chapel at Paris; but most of them, including Juxon, Skinner, and Duppa, lived on quietly and unobtrusively in England, meeting together from time to time apparently without concealment at Juxon's house at Richmond to talk over the affairs of the Church, and occasionally holding ordinations. This they continued to do even after 1655, but then of course with greater precautions of secrecy.

But besides the Episcopal Clergy who remained true to their ordination vow, and continued to use the service

of the Church and none other (of whom there must have been very few left after 1655), there was a large number of men who had been Episcopally ordained, but had made terms with the *de facto* government. These men had taken the Engagement even if they had refused the Covenant, had given up the use of the Prayer Book if they had not adopted that of the Directory, and were apparently accustomed to use a service of their own arrangement, which included as much of the Prayer Book as they dared to insert. These conforming Episcopalians had the high authority of Dr. Sanderson, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, for their conduct, who actually drew up a liturgy for their use, which contained as much of the Prayer Book as he thought was consistent with the conscientious declaration that the book which he was using was not the Prayer Book. The Committees of Scandalous Ministers no doubt managed to get rid of a good many of this class of Clergy; still there must have been numbers who eluded their vigilance, and continued comfortably in their benefices, until the Restoration enabled them to hoist their true colours once again.

A larger class still were to be found among the Episcopally ordained Clergy, who had honestly and conscientiously embraced Puritan doctrines, and had become Presbyterians or Independents under the pressure of the times, just as their flocks were becoming Presbyterian or Independent. Such men had merely stayed on in the benefices to which they had been legally instituted, and if it was desired to get rid of them, nothing less than a conviction for heresy or Nonconformity could legally do it.



And lastly, there were those who had never received Episcopal ordination at all, but had been either set  
The unordained ministers apart for the ministry by the Westminster Assembly, or more often had been called to the pulpit by the congregation and confirmed in the benefice by the Committee of Triers. These formed the bulk of the Puritan ministers, who looked upon the Church as corrupt, and would have nothing to do with her discipline or worship.

With so many rival claims and conflicting interests to adjust, Charles and his chief adviser Clarendon may  
Attempt of Charles to secure toleration well have despaired of finding a way out of their difficulties which should do justice to all parties ; yet at first they seem honestly to have done their best. In the Declaration from Breda, the Great Charter of the restored monarchy, Charles promised on the word of a king 'a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom, and that we shall be ready to consent to such an act of Parliament as upon mature deliberation shall be offered to us for the full granting that indulgence.' These words clearly contemplated a policy of toleration, not of comprehension, but a toleration wider and more generous than that of Cromwell. The Protectorate, supported only by a minority of the nation, could not afford to tolerate the religious opinions of Churchmen, because among Churchmen were found its most dangerous political opponents. The monarchy, welcomed back by the ardent loyalty of the vast majority of the nation, had no reason to be afraid of the few discontented

fanatics who stood apart and scowled at the general enthusiasm. From the first the restoration of the Church, subject to a policy of liberty to tender consciences, was just as much a condition of Charles' return as was the restoration of the monarchy, subject to an indemnity for all except the regicides.

Accordingly the Church came back to her lands and her dignities with as little question as did the Crown. Directly Charles was firmly seated on the throne, the Episcopalian Clergy, who had been ejected from their benefices, began to try and oust in their turn the intruders who had taken possession. At the Universities and at the Cathedrals many of the dispossessed Fellows and Canons returned to their stalls without difficulty. The Prayer Book was again used. New Bishops were appointed to the vacant sees. Everything seemed gradually to be resuming its old appearance, and the Convention Parliament, finding that some regulation was necessary, passed an Act which confirmed for the present the titles of holders of benefices which were undisputed, but authorised the replacement of the Clergy who had been ejected under the Commonwealth.

In reality the more quickly the Church was returning to her honours and emoluments, the more necessary it became to define the limits of membership. The existence of a permanent body of Non-conformists had for the first time in the history of the Church of England been clearly recognised in the promise of the Declaration of Breda of liberty to tender consciences. As the machinery of the Church gradually got into working order again it

The question  
of the com-  
prehension of  
Puritanism

became all-important to decide what classes of men were thus permanently to take up their position outside the pale of the national Church. For the last hundred years the question which had agitated the English Church had been whether Puritanism could or could not find a place within her borders. That question was now ripe for settlement. Puritanism had claimed supremacy within the Church in vain. It had exercised supremacy over the Church by force. It had failed to win England to its side in its hour of triumph. Now in the hour of its defeat was it strong enough to maintain the rights of an equal, or must it accept the toleration of an inferior?

The question fortunately did not present itself as a practical matter in so broad an aspect. The larger and the more uncompromising part of the Puritans were Independents, and it was obviously impossible that Independency and the Church could ever amalgamate, unless one side or the other gave up its distinctive opinions; but this, though not less true, was far less obvious in the case of the Presbyterians.

Many of the Presbyterian clergy, such as Baxter and Reynolds, had received their early training from the Church before the days of Laud. They did not attach the same magic virtue to the government of presbyters and presbyteries as did the Scots. They were quite ready to accept the government of Bishops, provided the Bishops were subject to the control of their Clergy, and held the doctrines of orthodox Calvinism. For some months after the Restoration long conferences were held between

Impossibility  
of making  
terms with  
the Inde-  
pendents

Negotiations  
with the  
Presby-  
terians

Clarendon and the leaders of the moderate Presbyterians—sometimes in the presence of Charles himself—at which efforts were made to negotiate terms of reunion, and which were so far attended with success that Reynolds accepted the Bishopric of Norwich, and Baxter thought seriously of accepting that of Hereford.

But the more the matters at issue were discussed, the more it became increasingly evident that the division between the two parties was based on a difference of religious principle, which it was equally impossible to bridge over and to ignore. In all attempts to bring about union between different parties there must be a point at which compromise sinks into hypocrisy, and that point was very quickly reached in the discussions between Baxter and the Bishops. Baxter and his Presbyterian friends were in the same position with regard to the Prayer Book and the Church system as Jewel and his Zurich friends had been in the early days of Elizabeth. They did not believe in the Catholic Church. They did not believe in the Apostolic succession. They did not believe in the reality of the sacramental Presence. They did not believe in baptismal regeneration. They desired, naturally enough, that as ministers of the Church they should not be compelled to use ceremonies which implied doctrines which they did not hold. The use of the surplice, the sign of the cross in baptism, the posture of kneeling at the reception of the Holy Communion—all to their minds were intended to teach the existence of the Divine Society and the mysterious nature of the Sacraments, just as the use of the cope, the surplice, and the square cap had seemed to teach the same to Jewel and to Parkhurst a

Funda-  
mental dif-  
ferences of  
principle

hundred years before. But Jewel and Parkhurst had been able to accept a system which they disliked, and had brought themselves to use ceremonies which they considered superstitious, because they looked confidently forward to the day when their conformity would place them in a position which would enable them to destroy all of which they disapproved at a blow. Elizabeth and Parker, in the face of the danger from Philip II. and the Roman Catholics, had not dared to dispense with the assistance of men who, if not good Churchmen, were at least good Protestants. Neither plea was now available to Baxter or to Charles. The principles of the Reformation had worked themselves out. The religious thought, of which it had been the source, had by this time carved out for itself the channels in which it was to run. The settlement now to be made would be final. There was no likelihood that the Church would in a few years' time alter its character. Unless it became decidedly Protestant now, it was not in the least probable that it would become more Protestant as time went on.

On the other hand, there was no political reason why Charles and Clarendon should exert any strong pressure on the Bishops, to make them admit into the Church system practices which were founded on a totally different conception of religion from that of the Church. There was no hope of including all the religious thought of England within the limits of the national Church, however widely they were stretched. It was impossible to conceive any organisation worth the name which could include the man who believed in baptismal regeneration, and the man who refused to baptize infants; or which could combine in a healthy

No political  
necessity for  
terms with  
the Presby-  
terians

unity the man who believed in the Divine nature of Episcopal rule, and the man who maintained that each separate congregation had by God's ordinance the right of self-government. And if (putting out of the question the smaller sects, such as the Familists, the Levellers, the Fifth Monarchy men, and the Quakers) it was hopeless to try and bring the important bodies of Baptists and Independents into communion with members of the Church, there was no political reason whatever for altering the traditional character of the Church, and doing violence to the religious opinions of Churchmen, in order to obtain the co-operation of the Presbyterians.

Presbyterianism, as we have seen, was an exotic which never took strong root on English soil. Most of the laity who embraced it, embraced it because it seemed to them to be a system which guarded against the advent of another Laud, and was a guarantee against disorder. In the troubles which had come upon them since the fall of Laud, they had found that there were worse things to endure than even sacerdotal and prerogative government. Like Manchester and Hollis, they were quite willing to return to the bosom of the Church, to accept its discipline, and to take their chance of another Laud. From all parts of the country came evidence to show that no one cared for Presbyterianism. Even Sharpe, the agent of the Scotch divines in England, was constrained to admit that he knew 'few or none who desire Presbyterianism, much less appear for it. I find the Presbyterian cause wholly given up and lost. Lauderdale, one of those politicians who are useful

gauges of public opinion, because like the rats they ever quit a sinking ship, was soon found attending the King's private Chapel and listening to the preaching of the Bishops. Baillie, heart-broken at the ruin which is impending over Presbyterianism, pours out his 'exceeding grief of mind.' 'Is the Service Book read in the King's Chappell? Has the House of Lords past an order for the Service Book? Oh, where are we so soon? Is the solemn oath of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, subscrybed so oft by their hands to eradicat Bishops turned all to wind? Why did the Parliament a few months since appoint the Covenant to be hung up in every church of England, and every year to be publickly read? Can our gracious Prince ever forget his solemn Oath and Subscription? Could I ever have dreamed that Bishops and Books should have been so soon restored, with so great ease and silence of the Presbyterian Covenanters in the two Houses, the Citie and Assemblie of London, of Lancashyre and of other shyres?'<sup>1</sup> Clearly it was not worth while to run the risk of impairing the Catholic character of the Church, and of damping the loyalty of Churchmen, in order to conciliate Presbyterian Covenanters, who in their strongholds of London and Lancashire had seen the restoration of the Prayer Book and of Episcopacy 'with so great ease and silence.'

Yet Charles and Clarendon proceeded carefully. In the autumn of the year 1660 a royal declaration drawn up by Clarendon was issued, in which Charles

Proposal for  
a limited  
Episcopacy

promised to convene a conference of divines in order to revise the Prayer Book. It further sug-

<sup>1</sup> Baillie, iii. 405.

gested that presbyters should be joined with the Bishops in the exercise of Church discipline, and offered, by way of giving liberty to tender consciences, that the ceremonies complained of should not for the present be enforced. This declaration was probably meant as a feeler, to see what sort of reception a compromise of that kind was likely to get; and a Bill was accordingly introduced into the Convention Parliament to give it the force of law. From the way in which this Bill was treated in Parliament, it could easily be seen how far it was likely to be palatable to the country. The moderate Presbyterians were willing to consider that it formed a possible basis of agreement. Baxter, Calamy, and Reynolds were delighted with it, but the majority of Parliament would have none of it, and it was thrown out in the Commons by a majority of twenty-six.

It is true that the result was partly owing to the exertions of the court party, who used all their influence against the Bill, but the result was nevertheless significant. If Presbyterianism was content to see itself effaced 'with so great ease and silence' in London and Lancashire, where it was strongest; if Presbyterian leaders were willing to accept the Prayer Book unaltered, and simply return unconditionally to the obedience of the Church; if the Convention Parliament, which undoubtedly contained many more Presbyterians than any subsequent assembly was likely to do, refused to accept a compromise which had received the sanction of the chief Presbyterian clergy, on the ground that it surrendered too much of the Church's rights; if, notwithstanding the rejection of that compromise by Parliament, Reynolds, one of the

Reasons for  
its failure



best known of the Presbyterians, was ready to accept a Bishopric, it would have been simply folly in Charles and in Clarendon to have pursued a policy of comprehension further. If successful, they would but have gained Baxter and a few Presbyterian clergy, at the expense of alienating their own supporters, and there is no reason to think that they would have been successful. The compromise which was rejected by the Convention Parliament with the assistance of the court would have been rejected by the Royalist Parliament which followed, had the whole influence of the Court been on its side.

So ended the last serious attempt to give to Puritanism a legitimate place within the system of the Church. At the Savoy Conference, which met The Savoy Conference in 1661 to discuss the revision of the Prayer Book, it was submission that was offered, not compromise. The day of compromise was over. The nation had rejected it. The Church did not propose it. The Presbyterians did not demand it. The 'Reformed Liturgy,' drawn up by Baxter and put forward as an alternative for the Prayer Book, is in no sense a compromise. It is a distinct breach with historical Christianity, a distinct attempt to reform the Church on new and totally different principles. The Bishops on their side, knowing that they had the nation at their back, did not attempt to meet the dissentients on equal terms. They contented themselves with assuming a purely defensive position, and called upon their opponents to show cause why the Prayer Book, as it stood, should not be enforced. So, gradually, the days passed fruitlessly away and the conference degenerated into a school

of dialectics. When the time at which their session was to conclude arrived, the disputants had sorrowfully to tell the King that though their desire for peace and unity was unabated they could not agree as to the means to be employed.

While the conference was discussing unavailingly and unprofitably terms of comprehension, Convocation was undertaking the revision of the Prayer Book in real earnest. The Bishops were almost to a man the disciples of Laud. In the Clergy of the Restoration are seen the full results of the Laudian revival. At their head stood the venerable figure of Juxon, the successor of Laud at St. John's and at the Treasury, the chosen friend of Charles I., and the confidant of his last hours upon earth, now sinking into an honoured grave, bowed with the weight of eighty years. Sheldon, Bishop of London, who as Warden of All Souls had himself experienced the tender mercies of Puritan persecution, and had done so much with his purse and his sympathy to lighten the trials of his brethren in distress, Duppa and Skinner, who amid many dangers had boldly found means to carry on the torch of apostolic grace, even amid the proscriptions of Cromwell, Cosin, the most learned of liturgical scholars, who as long ago as 1627 had incurred the vengeance of one House of Commons for his book of devotions, and now as Bishop of Durham was soon to see another House of Commons accept without question and without discussion the Prayer Book which Convocation under his guidance had done so much to enrich, Morley, the dexterous controversialist who had acted as chaplain to Charles I. at Newmarket and Holmby House,

Sanderson, the learned casuist, Bull and Pearson, the theologians; and Gunning, the confessor—all these were members of the Convocation of 1661, and formed a body of Clergy of whom any Church might well be proud.

Deeply read as they were in theology and liturgical knowledge, with the experience of the last twenty years fresh in their memories, they were determined that, if possible, there should be in the future no room for misconception as to the nature and claims of the Church. Their object was to enrich the Prayer Book, not to denude it; to make it more Catholic, not less so; to develope its teaching, not to minimise it and explain it away. The Prayer Book of 1662 marks the close of the long liturgical struggle, just as the Savoy Conference marks the close of the long political struggle, in which ecclesiastical parties in England had been engaged since the Reformation. By it, in worship, just as in doctrine and in discipline, the Church definitely refused to break with historical Christianity, definitely refused to rank herself with the Protestant churches of Europe, reiterated and to the best of her power enforced her claim to be the Catholic Church of Christ in England.

The assertion of these principles necessarily involved the ejection of unordained ministers from all benefices of which they held possession. It was manifestly impossible that a Church which taught that the power of the priesthood could be transmitted only by the hands of a Bishop, could allow those who had never received Episcopal ordination still to receive the emoluments of Church benefices and affect to administer the sacraments. The revised

Triumph of  
Laud's prin-  
ciples in the  
revision of  
the Prayer  
Book

Ejection  
of the un-  
ordained  
ministers

Prayer Book, when it had received the final approval of the two Convocations, was annexed to a Bill for uniformity which had already passed the Commons and been read a second time in the Lords. In that form it was accepted by both Houses without discussion, and received the royal assent in May 1662. By the Act this Prayer Book was made the only legal service-book of the Church of England, and all ministers were compellable to use it and none other after St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662. On that day about two thousand Independent, Baptist, and Presbyterian ministers, who were either unable in conscience to use the Prayer Book or were unwilling to submit to Episcopal ordination, were obliged to leave their benefices and go forth, as the Clergy of the Church had done twenty years before, to certain poverty and possible persecution.

The period of suspense was not long. The House of Commons, Royalist to a man, was eager for retaliation. The sympathies of Clarendon were wholly for a policy of enforced uniformity such as had marked the days of Elizabeth. Charles himself, careless and frivolous, had a hearty dislike for a Puritan. There was nothing to stand in the way of persecution except the old promise of 'liberty to tender consciences' in the Declaration from Breda; and that might well be considered cancelled, since it was limited by a promise to consent to such legislation on the subject as Parliament should propose, and it was certain that Parliament would never agree to toleration. So the old Elizabethan policy was revived. The harsh statutes of the Long Royalist Parliament treated religious Dissenters as political outcasts, guarded the State

Persecution  
of the Non-  
conformists

from the intrusion of Roman Catholics by the degrading imposition of the sacramental test, imposed Episcopacy upon the reluctant Scots, and so did much once more to identify the Church with the persecuting and reactionary spirit of prerogative government.

To the blind Puritan poet in his retreat in Bunhill Row, 'fallen on evil days and evil tongues,' the down-  
Milton's  
attack on  
the Restora-  
tion as reac-  
tionary fall of Puritanism and the wreck of so many hopes seemed to be nothing less than a great moral fall on the part of the nation, the judgment of God upon a backsliding people.

What more oft, in nations grown corrupt,  
 And by their vices brought to servitude,  
 Than to love bondage more than liberty—  
 Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;  
 And to despise, or envy, or suspect,  
 Whom God hath of His special favour raised  
 As their deliverer? If he aught begin,  
 How frequent to desert him, and at last  
 To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds!

Yet it was not so. Spenser, at the beginning of the Puritan era, had complained of a corrupt clergy, Milton, at the end of it, complains of a corrupt Nation. Both were partly and neither wholly in the right. To Milton, the nation which had of its own accord chosen to put its neck again under the yoke of kings and priests was necessarily corrupt. It was returning like the dog to his own vomit again, and the sow which was washed to its wallowing in the mire. It loved 'bondage more than liberty, bondage with ease than strenuous liberty.'

In reality the cause of 'strenuous liberty' was better

served by the restoration of the monarchy than by the continuance of the Protectorate, by the restoration of the Church than by the continuance of Independent anarchy. The Crown had defined its relations to the law. The monarchy, restored by the law and in the interests of the law, was subject to the law. Never again could a King of England claim in right of his crown to be supreme over the law. The nation might in the exuberance of its loyalty appear for the moment to be oblivious of its responsibilities, but when its liberties were once again really threatened, it would be found that the mantle of Pym and of Hampden had descended to worthy successors. The Church had defined her relations to Puritanism. From henceforth they were to be two separate bodies, each administering its own discipline, each teaching what it believed to be true, each trying to justify its existence by the influence it gained over men. It is true that in the excitement of its victory the Church did for a moment forget the conditions of its new position, and returned to the persecuting policy of earlier days, but it was not for long. Before the century was out it learned to discard its theories of divine right, and renounce its doctrine of passive obedience. It contentedly acquiesced in a policy which, by granting free toleration to all religious opinion, found the only possible solution for the problem of religious division; and which, by securing pre-eminence and security to the Church, provided the best possible safeguard for orderly government, and the surest guarantee of true religious equality.

Really a step  
towards  
civil and  
religious  
liberty



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